University of Alberta

A MATERIAL CULTURE ANALYSIS THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO BAGANDA'S EXPERIENCES WITH BARK CLOTH

by

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Abstract

In this material culture analysis, I used narrative inquiry to explore selected Baganda's experiences with bark cloth. In the process, I also showed the tangible-intangible interrelationship of material culture. Bark cloth was widely used in the daily and spiritual lives of the Baganda in the past. Today, the influence of foreign textiles has expanded the uses of bark cloth to include more activities like modern art, crafts and fashion design. Foreign textiles are also gradually replacing bark cloth in the traditional uses like burial and other cultural activities. In the study, eleven participants recalled and shared their lived stories of experience with bark cloth within the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Working within this space allowed them to travel across temporal and spatial boundaries, to when and where their experiences occurred, and to share these in relation to the present and future. It also enabled them to recall the people with whom these experiences were shared and how the participants felt about their experiences. By telling of their past and present experiences with bark cloth, the participants' stories exposed the intangible wealth laden in the tangible bark cloth. The stories also revealed how, within time and place and the personal/social, bark cloth was experienced. Intangible value was bestowed upon the bark cloth, thus indicating a strong tangible-intangible interrelationship. Using this information, I illustrate that UNESCO's present taxonomy of tangible and intangible heritage, separates, rather than integrate tangible and intangible aspects of material culture. Future comparative investigations may prove to be useful in making more explicit the tangible-intangible interrelationship of material cultural elements.

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May the Good Lord bless all those who contributed in any part towards the materializing of this book and towards my academic, spiritual and physical growth. The journey has been worthwhile.

DEDICATION

To my dear parents Mum, Gertrude and Dad, the late Samuel Enoch Bwanswa Sekandi, whose prayers for me to access this opportunity came to pass, only too late for Dad to physically share the journey with us. I have missed both of you so much but I know Dad is in a better place…

His final words…1 Peter 5:14 will always be with us.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

In this inductive study, I explore the lived stories of experience of various individuals who were engaged in activities related to bark cloth in Buganda- Central Uganda. The overarching aim of this work is to create a framework for understanding intangible and tangible aspects of material culture. Specifically, I explored people's experiences with what I came to see as the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth in Buganda. By intangible aspects of bark cloth, I refer to those representations, skills and knowledge associated with bark cloth that cannot be seen or touched but exist as mental associations and values. The tangible aspects, on the other hand, are those physical elements of bark cloth that people can see and touch, including the people who make and use bark cloth and related artifacts. I begin by contextualizing the research in this first chapter with background information about bark cloth around the world, and a historical and geographical location of bark cloth within Buganda – central Uganda. In the second chapter, I draw from the human ecological approach and material culture theory to locate bark cloth as part of people's material, natural and cultural environment and to explore the importance of considering both tangible and intangible elements of the bark cloth. In chapter three I describe how a narrative inquiry approach, which focuses on human experience, enabled me to obtain stories of experience from my participants. I proceed to justify the relevance of using narrative inquiry as a method of obtaining stories of my participants' experiences with bark cloth. In this third chapter, I also describe the research preparations I went through before entering the field, my field experience and how I employed narrative inquiry in data analysis.

In chapter four, I present the narrative accounts of my participants, which are my own narratives of the conversations I had with my participants. I explain how each participant was approached and how they became participants in my study, and I provide a more detailed, descriptive and analytical explanation of how our interaction transpired. The fifth chapter is a further analysis of the participants' stories of experience with bark cloth using narrative inquiry as a means to arrive at both individual and more general issues arising from the participants' stories. I extract narrative threads from the participants' stories with a focus on tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth within the categories of the three dimensional narrative inquiry space that is, time/temporality, place/space and personal/social interactions (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50). I then conclude my thesis and make proposals for possible future implications and research projects in the sixth and final chapter.

1.2 Background on bark cloth

From the bast fibers of various tree species around the world is crafted a non-woven textile known as bark cloth. The various tree species that yield bark cloth include the *Moraceae* or mulberry family, which is the commonest source of bark cloth (Leonard and Terrell,1980, p. 13; Christensen 1968, p. 3), with the best quality coming from the paper mulberry family (*Broussonetia papyferia)* (Brigham, 1911, p . 7; Kooijman, 1972, p. 1; Pritchard, 1984, p. 1.). Other sources include the breadfruit species *(Autocarpus incisa)* of the Pacific, the upahs or 'poison trees' *(Antiaris toxicaria)* from the Malay. The *mamaki* shrub (*Pipturus albidus*) was also used by the ancient Hawaiians, (Leonard & Terrell, 1980, p.13, Brigham, 1911, p.7). In areas beyond Oceania and in East Africa,

bark cloth is obtained from the numerous *Ficus* or fig species, both cultivated and wild. In Uganda, as elsewhere in Africa, bark cloth is obtained from the *ficus natalensis*, a fig tree species (Gillow, 2003, p. 43), characterized by an umbrella of foliage, and, a straight trunk which makes it possible to access the bark from which the bark cloth is obtained.

Buganda, where bark cloth has been skillfully crafted for hundreds of years, is the largest of the ancient colonial kingdoms, which was formed from the grouping of ethnic factions with different political systems and cultures by Britain during its colonial rule (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ug.html). Buganda is one of a cluster of ancient kingdoms in the area, sometimes known as the Interlacustrine States, and the largest ethnic group in Uganda. Buganda occupies the central part of the country which lies astride the equator in the Eastern part of Africa. The Baganda are a Bantu speaking people (the Bantu speak related languages and have similar characteristics and constitute more than half of Uganda's population). The Baganda are also the best known bark cloth makers in Africa (http://www.molli.org.uk/bark/, 2004). Bark cloth making in Buganda was extensive until the introduction of Christianity and foreign textiles in the mid 19th century, by missionaries and other world travelers. After the British colonialists took over Buganda, they declared bark cloth and related cultural activities as pagan and ancient, thus discouraging the art and use of bark cloth making. In 1967, long after independence, the effects of the ethnic divisions that the colonialists had created were evidenced in the then Prime Minister's banning of all cultural activities including bark cloth making. As a result, most cultural activities such as those involving bark cloth, were suppressed. Almost forty years later, in 2003, when bark cloth making in Uganda was proclaimed by UNESCO, as one of the world's outstanding examples of

intangible heritage that needed to be safe guarded, I could not help pondering how much cultural knowledge had been lost over the years and what it was like for those individuals who continued to be involved in bark cloth related activities. I, however, felt that there was a lot of concrete information lacking in the proclamation that needed to be provided, especially information that linked the tangible qualities of bark cloth to its intangible aspects.

Buganda is made up of fifty two clans and each clan has an assigned cultural role. The *Ngonge* clan is in charge of bark cloth making and decoration in Buganda kingdom (Musinguzi, 2005), and the making of the bark cloth is undertaken by the men (Thompson, 1934, p. 18-19; Gillow, 2003, p. 172). The men then pass the bark cloth-making skills to their sons and grandsons, to ensure continuity of the craft. Bark cloth was a key element of the daily and spiritual lives of the Baganda, and was skillfully crafted for hundreds of years (Mukuye, 2003). Although, in the past, bark cloth was deeply involved in the religious and ceremonial life of the Baganda which centered on superhuman spirits and various gods, it continues to be a key form of material culture in Buganda. (Mukuye, 2003). The cloth was also adorned with cowry shells and hand stenciled designs made from black dye and served to outfit the royal family of Buganda Kingdom. Today bark cloth is still recognized as the proper form of adornment for the royal family despite the wide use of modern textiles. It characterizes all cultural functions and is usually worn over traditional clothing made from modern textiles (http://www.ipoaa.com/uganda_folklore.htm, 2004). Besides being used for royal or other cultural activities, bark cloth was also used by the local people for clothing, bedding, food storage, architectural and aesthetic purposes (Maitwe, personal

communication, May 5, 2005). Today, bark cloth in Buganda survives to a lesser extent as bedding and clothing especially amongst the economically disadvantaged, as cultural and drama costumes. Bark cloth also continues to be used during rites of passage such as initiation ceremonies and as shrouds for the dead. Recently, various artists and fashion designers have turned to more contemporary applications by using bark cloth as a source of inspiration for their work (Kaiza, 2004; Ssejjengo, 2005). Other efforts have been noted where bark cloth has been made into straps, belts, head bands, purses, wallets, and other items most of which are sold as souvenirs to tourists. In the next chapter, I review the literature related to bark cloth as material culture, in terms of how it makes up part of people's environment. I also discuss the interrelationship between tangible and intangible aspects of material cultural heritage with specific reference to bark cloth.

1.3 Definition of terms

The following definitions have been adopted for the purposes of this study:

Tangible: "capable of being perceived especially by the sense of touch… substantially real… capable of being precisely identified or realized by the mind … capable of being appraised at an actual or approximate value" (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 2007)

Intangible: "…includes song, music, drama, skills, crafts, and the other parts of culture that can be recorded but cannot be touched and interacted with, without a vehicle for the culture" (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2007).

Heritage: cultural features of a particular society, such as traditions, languages or buildings, that are inherited from the past, lived with today and are passed on to future generations (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2007; http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/, 2007).

Culture: The general traditions, habits or beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time.

Material culture: "…objects made or modified by humans, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly to reflect the belief patterns of individuals who made, purchased or used them, and, by extension, the belief patterns of the larger society to which they belong" (Schlereth, 1985, p. 4).

Experience: "…a changing stream that is characterized by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment" (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p. 39).

Interrelationship: The way in which two or more things or people are connected and affect one another (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2007).

Buganda: The largest ethnic group in Uganda.

Baganda: The people of Buganda (plural).

Muganda: A person belonging to Buganda ethnic group (singular).

Kiganda: The culture of Buganda.

Luganda: the language spoken by the Baganda.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw from a broad body of literature from human ecology, material culture, anthropology, cultural studies etc, to locate my study in the discussions regarding the tangibility and intangibility of bark cloth as material cultural heritage. I begin by demonstrating how my study fits within the human ecological perspective as part of people's natural, human-built and behavioral environment (Kilsdonk, 1983). I also employ material cultural theory to inform the study by underscoring the importance of the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of material culture. Additionally, I draw from several writers' responses to UNESCO's taxonomy of tangible and intangible cultural heritage to help concretize my argument for the need to consider people's experiences with objects as expressive of the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of material culture.

2.2 Human Ecological Perspective

Human environments also referred to as ecosystems, include natural, human-built and behavioral environments, with the human being at the centre of all three environments (Kilsdonk, 1983, p. 41). These environments are key elements in the area of Human Ecology, and, their interrelationships with each other and with humans are illustrated using a version of Kilsdonk's Human Ecological model (see Fig 1).

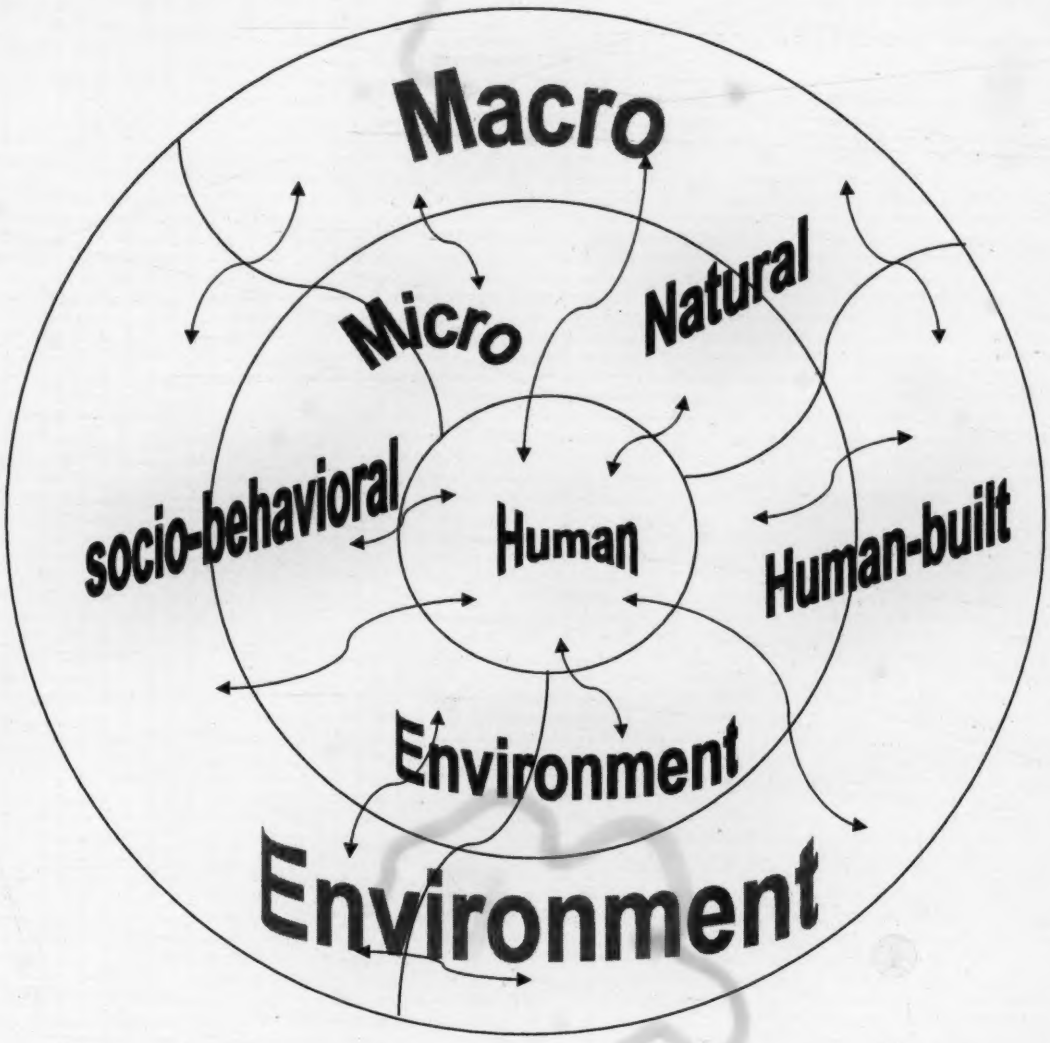

Figure 1. *A version of Kildonk's (1983) Human Ecological model*

Conjoining the terms 'human' and 'ecology' emphasizes the inevitable presence of humans in their environments. The humans transform their environments into meaningful spaces for sustainable living and interaction with each other and with nature (Steiner, 2002, p. 37). Human Ecology informs this study because of its focus on the reciprocal interactions between humans and their environments, of which material objects are a part. Human Ecology enables us to conceptualize the contexts in which individuals interact with and make meanings from material objects (Marten, 2001, p. 1). It emphasizes the pluralistic, integrated and holistic nature of human environments in which both the person and the environment mutually influence each other (Sontag and Bubolz, 1988, p. 119; Visvader, 1986, p. 117; Westney, Brabbles and Edwards, 1988, p. 129). Humans and their environments are regarded as integrated wholes that influence each other and eventually determine the quality of people's lives. The human environment consists of the natural, human-built and social-behavioral environments. The natural environment includes all naturally existing biological and physiological systems within the individual's internal environment which influence the behavioral environment of the individual. Therein exists the natural physiological factors, which influence the individual's ability to create material objects using other materials from the external environment, which may be natural or human-built. The final object may be created or used for self fulfillment or as a target towards another audience (Fiore, Kimle and Moreno, 1996). In this case, the ability for one to craft a non woven cloth from the bark of a tree or to create artifacts from bark cloth, is influenced by their biological and physiological systems.

The human built and human behavioral environments, essentially "man-made", include both micro environments like family, and macro environments like the general society in which the individual lives. It is in these two environments that the individual encounters cultural values and norms that influence the choice of material objects and how the individual interacts with them. Each type of environment has an influence on the other and the individual negotiates within and between those environments in a fluid manner that removes any existing boundaries. For the people of Buganda, bark cloth is one of those material objects that is culturally significant to them. As a product of natural sources, bark cloth is part of the people's natural environment because it is obtained from trees and shrubs. It becomes part of the human-built environment when the tree bark is stripped and the bark is crafted into bark cloth which is then put to various uses. The bark cloth then becomes part of the people's behavioral environment as they craft it and put it to various social and cultural uses. The cultural information influences how the people interact with the bark cloth and any cultural shifts will result in shifts in the way people interact with bark cloth. The natural, human built and social behavioral environments influence how people relate with bark cloth and the bark cloth also influences how people relate to it as part of their environment. It is within these environments that the intangible cultural information manifests itself through tangible bark cloth which, in turn, yields intangible information, and these two influence each other. As part of people's environment, material objects play a primary role in human socialization (Tilley, 2006, p. 62). It is through the creation, use and distribution of material objects that people express their beliefs, attitudes and representations of objects,

therefore, become tangible expressions of people's skills and knowledge, beliefs and attitudes.

2.3 Material Culture Studies

The field of material culture studies has been approached by many researchers from various fields including anthropology, archaeology, history and human ecology (Grassby, 2005; Miller, 1999; Ratner, 2000; Tilley, 1989). Nevertheless what all these authors agree with is the existence of culturally influenced human-object interrelationships. People relate to things that they find meaningful particularly those material objects that they have prior knowledge about and sometimes even identify themselves with (Keane, 2005). The relationship between people and material objects involves both tangible and intangible elements which influence each other. For example, in the case of this study, the participants were involved in various bark cloth related activities that ranged from making the bark cloth, making artifacts from the bark cloth, designing clothes made out of bark cloth, painting on bark cloth and generally using bark cloth in various ways. Their involvement with bark cloth was mostly influenced by the cultural knowledge they possessed and acquired during their involvement. People are always actively involved in the creation and recreation of culture through "constructing and externalizing new meanings" (Ratner, 2000, pp. 413-415) and consequently, the essential elements of culture are translated into material life (Grassby, 2005). This is evident in the various ways that bark cloth in Buganda is being put to use today compared to the past where it was used mainly for domestic purposes and traditional rituals. As the meanings of bark cloth for the people of Buganda shift, so does the creation process. Thus new ideas yield new creations involving bark cloth artifacts.

Material culture contains hidden information which is not necessarily easy to decipher (Hawes, 2005), but many things that are understood mentally can only be expressed by creating artifacts (Rogan, 1996). Bark cloth therefore becomes a hub for the mental representations, beliefs and values of the people of Buganda. The variety of artifacts made from bark cloth and related uses are indicators of the multiplicity of the meanings being assigned to bark cloth. These meanings seem to have attracted other ethnic groups in Uganda to get more involved with bark cloth, and tourists have also opted to carry back with them bark cloth artifacts, as evidence of their Ugandan experience. Straw (1999) suggests that "artifacts crystallize global cultural relations" (p. 1), thus bringing together people with similar values. These relations would be less meaningful without material culture. Bark cloth could therefore be considered as a physical unifying factor with intangible cultural elements that appeal to people in Buganda and beyond. Material culture is, therefore, the physical and tangible manifestation of culture; it is "culture made material" (Glassie, 1999, p. 41).

Material culture involves the social production of preserved social information which is translated into objectified symbols (Tilley, 1989, p. 189) and a lot of human behavior and communication involves interactions between people and objects (Schiffer, 1999). Glassie (1999) points out that, although culture is immaterial, intangible, intrinsic and fluid (p. 41), it also involves the creation, accumulation and surrounding oneself with, and passing on of, cultural creations. Being involved in activities related to bark cloth ensures production, promotion and preservation of cultural information. Passing on this knowledge and skills is also a way of ensuring the continuity of these activities related to bark cloth, and the cultural information. Without the bark cloth, the information

may be difficult to disseminate and likewise, passing on the bark cloth without relevant information may lead to the ultimate loss of the information and the object itself. Thus objects need to be linked to both the intangible aspects of social relations and the tangible qualities of materials and function, because people interact with objects that they regard as meaningful to them. Additionally, people make meaning of their selves by interacting with and making meaning of material objects (Chapman, 2005), therefore we need to consider objects in relation to the people that either created or used them, or the socio-cultural beliefs that informed the creation process of the artifacts (Straw, 1999). Objects are physical expressions of the way of life of those who interact with them (Grassby, 2005, pp. 592-593), thus, the intangible cultural information cannot easily be separated from the tangible objects which embody it.

Through what Miller (2005) calls a "material mirror" we see the materialization of the historical world built by our predecessors in the form of material culture and this continues through us (p. 8). The "material mirror" helps us to realize who or what we are because material things are created within our cultural contexts and are therefore embodied with our intangible attitudes, beliefs, values and feelings (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). Bark cloth in Buganda, for instance, was crafted several years ago, but continues to be used though in some different ways from what the original crafters intended it to be. In addition to the utilitarian roles, bark cloth has played a cultural role over the years because of the eventual inherent intangible elements that embody it. Material objects have, since their inception, served a utilitarian cultural role which is fundamental in state building (Buchli, 2002, p. 3) and enhancing national cohesiveness (Rowlands, 2002). When people inhabit a place, they create objects in their environments which, following

their demise or emigration, are left behind as objectified evidence of their past presence (Tilley, 2006, p. 60). Rowlands (2002) also refers to material objects as "cultural property" which is unique to a single homogeneous cultural group and can be used to identify its specific culture (p. 129). For the people of Buganda, bark cloth is a unifying factor because of its symbolic significance and the intangible qualities inherent in it. Objects are therefore laden with intrinsic information, ideas, values, attitudes and emotional discourse of the societies or individuals that interact with them. Through material culture, we experience a sensory insight of how people experience their temporal and spatial environments and discern how people construct meaning of themselves (Prown, 1996, p. 25).

Material objects contain evidence of the process of creation, the plans and decisions in the creator's mind, the commitment of the creator in the process, the technology or tools used, the history of the maker and unspoken words materializing into artifacts: a blend of the physical material and the mind (Glassie, 1999, pp. 42-44). To understand objects, we therefore need to locate them spatially and temporally and as part of larger social contexts. The meanings obtained from locating objects spatially and temporally are as diverse as the contexts in which the objects are located (Grassby, 2005, p. 595; Miller, 1999, pp. 44-45). Knappett (2005) advances the concept of humanized artifacts. Since material artifacts are created for human use, the human incorporates characteristics that they feel will make the artifact useful to them, thus embodying the artifact with the desired qualities. The artifact, therefore, becomes an extension of the human body with intangible qualities embedded in it. It also suffices to note that, although humans create and use objects, objects exude a psychological presence which in

turn elicits reactions from humans, which is evidence of the reciprocal relationship between humans and the objects. This psychological presence represents the intangible aura that material objects possess. In this study of bark cloth, for instance, the bark cloth is crafted for utilitarian purposes like wrapping the dead, clothing the living, etc. The crafting, therefore, has to be done in such a way that the cloth is pliable enough to be used for the desired purposes. The maker, with the help of nature, imparts those desired characteristics of suppleness through the craft. The final product is the skill of the maker expressed as the finished bark cloth. There exists an interrelationship between the tangible final product of the crafting process, and the intangible skills and knowledge employed, in addition to desired values and representations. This interrelationship cannot be ignored. It is, therefore, important to emphasize the interplay between the intangible and tangible elements of material objects when discussing people's experiences with the objects.

2.4 Material culture: Tangible or Intangible?

Material culture is categorized by UNESCO under tangible heritage, one of the two categories of heritage, the other being intangible heritage. UNESCO defines heritage as "our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations" (http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/, 2007). Prott and O'Keefe (1992) also agree that heritage is something that can be handed down and, therefore, needs to be safeguarded (p. 311). However by defining and dividing heritage as tangible and intangible, UNESCO creates boundaries which seem to separate the two forms of heritage. This appears confusing to those members who have to safe guard their heritage

as by protecting the tangible, they may lose the intangible or vice versa. In the case of this study, if only the craft of bark cloth making is safeguarded, and the related cultural knowledge is not passed on, people may not use the bark cloth and, thus, it may be difficult for that part of Buganda's heritage to be passed on.

Tangible heritage according to UNESCO encompasses both natural and cultural heritage, natural heritage being naturally existing physical, biological, geological and physiological features or parts of it and or including natural environmental sites that support nature (http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws, 2006). Natural heritage has both specific spatial and temporal dimensions and, therefore, is dynamic (Catsadorakis, 2007, p. 309). Cultural heritage, on the other hand, is referred to by UNESCO as either individual or combined works of man and nature, evidenced as architectural or monumental works, caves and inscriptions, individual or groups of buildings in relation to the landscape and topographical features, all of which may be of archaeological, anthropological, ethnographical, historical, scientific or artistic interest (http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/ 2006). Bark cloth is part of both natural and cultural heritage because it is obtained from the bark of certain trees, and the bark is skillfully crafted into cloth. Bark cloth is, therefore, an important anthropological, ethnographical, historical, scientific and artistic work of man and nature. The bark has to be harvested skillfully at the right time, the tree has to be protected from the weather so new bark can grow back, and the harvested bark requires skill to be crafted. Other activities like selling the bark and making artifacts from the bark cloth also require a lot of knowledge and skill which the human, who is part of nature, possesses. It is also important to note that bark cloth trees need to be protected from deforestation, a common

problem in developing countries like Uganda where people use a lot of firewood as fuel for cooking (Mukuye, 2003). Catsadorakis (2007) therefore points out that cultural heritage consists of both tangible and intangible heritage, and is also dynamic.

UNESCO also defines intangible heritage as the living practices and traditions, representations and expressions and related knowledge and skills that people receive from their ancestors and pass on from generation to generation. Intangible cultural heritage may take the form of oral traditions and expressions, the performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices about nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php, 2004). Bark cloth and bark cloth artifact making may be considered as traditional craftsmanship, in addition to its use in performing arts and other traditional activities and rituals, and the related knowledge, skills and practices involved. UNESCO advances that tangible heritage is physical and can be safe guarded, but intangible heritage is constantly being recreated and therefore, relies on those who possess it to pass it down to the next generations, mainly through oral tradition, and as such, intangible heritage is very vulnerable and can be easily lost. However, intangible heritage without tangible heritage is potentially less meaningful because many of the rituals, practices and performances involve material objects, which, in Buganda, is usually bark cloth. I therefore find it impractical to separate the knowledge and skills required during the crafting of bark cloth and bark cloth artifacts, the traditional rituals and activities and the performing arts that involve bark cloth, from the bark cloth itself or the trees from which the bark cloth is obtained, or even the people engaged in the various activities that entail bark cloth. All units are so intertwined and interrelated that none can be considered in isolation.

Some scholars have also expressed concern about the seeming clear cut dichotomy that UNESCO uses to classify heritage (Moreno, Santagata and Tabassum, 2005). They argue for the need to recognize those intangible and tangible heritages are interrelated. UNESCO seems to be aware of the interrelationship between the two but does not present a clear explanation for it and the definitions it provides create more confusion. However, getting to the point of recognizing the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage has, for UNESCO, been a gradual movement that has involved several conventions. With the adoption of each convention, the definitions of the tangible and intangible heritage became clearer and so did the realization that the two were interrelated. For instance, the journey to UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the *Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage* started in the 1970's. With the establishment of the *Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972, it was evident that there was a part of heritage that was not being addressed (Kurin, 2004). However, several years and several conventions later, the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage* was unanimously adopted (Aikawa, 2004). This latter adoption also immediately revealed that something was still not addressed; the fact that heritage is rooted in both the tangible and intangible and that the two are interrelated (Munjeri, 2004). A year later, in 2004, the *Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Heritage* was adopted, in a bid to unite the two conventions (http://portal.unesco.org/culture/, 2006). On this occasion, UNESCO director Mr. Matsuura emphasized the need to attend to heritage in its entirety, by adopting unified approaches that address both the interrelatedness and autonomy of the tangible

and intangible heritage (http://portal.unesco.org/en, 2004), However, this suggestion is yet to be made more explicit for the member states.

Moreno et al. (2005) advance the concept of material cultural heritage which they describe as "the special area bordering on *intangible-oral* and *tangible-natural cultural heritages"* (p. 1). Material cultural heritage includes objects that are culturally functional and possess both tangible and intangible elements and are associated with a specific group of people (p. 3). They are concerned by UNESCO's definitions of tangible and intangible heritage, which seem to divide the two forms of heritage instead of seeking to unite them. Although UNESCO acknowledges that the tangible and intangible heritage is interrelated, the definitions provided are not explicit about this. The intangible heritage, for instance, is recognized as oral traditions and expressions including languages, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivities, knowledge and practices regarding nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship. In addition, the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith are also placed under intangible heritage when they are clearly tangible. Clearly, tangible objects contain intangible information and Moreno et al. (2005) prefer to refer to them as material cultural heritage. With this form of heritage, the intangible is perpetually entangled with the tangible (p. 3). Prott and O'Keefe (1992) also point out that "a cultural object whose textual information has been lost is less valuable to the further development of culture than it would otherwise be" (p. 308).

Although UNESCO seems to agree that tangible and intangible heritage are interrelated, it still defines each separately. This could probably be because some forms of heritage such as oral languages, appear not to involve material objects. However, those

people who speak languages that are almost extinct are tangible living human treasures that embody the intangible. Like material objects, the intangible information that these people possess can be lost if the objects are not safe guarded or when the people die. When material objects cease to be used or are transferred to another location, the original intangible meanings may be lost. I find the term material cultural heritage, as advanced by Moreno et al. (2005), sufficient to unite tangible and intangible heritage because it recognizes that the two are interrelated. It is in this same vein that I position my inquiry by demonstrating that bark cloth, a major form of material culture in Buganda, central Uganda is a hub where the interrelationship of both tangible and intangible aspects of heritage is manifested. Additionally, I use this inquiry to demonstrate that people are tangible expressions of intangible information, and this is demonstrated through their narratives that describe their lived experiences with bark cloth. By so doing, they also embody the bark cloth with intangible information.

2.5 Inquiring into material cultural heritage

As already explained, material cultural heritage includes objects that are culturally functional and possess both tangible and intangible elements and are associated with a specific group of people (Moreno et al. 2005, p. 3). I also expand it to include the people who are also referred to by UNESCO as living human treasures, and embody intangible knowledge and skills. Material cultural heritage is a symbolic representation of intangible information and it is through this symbolism that people make meaning of objects by associating them with personal life experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). If, for instance, people do not associate bark cloth with any personal experiences, it may not be very

meaningful to them when they encounter it. Therefore, in order to understand the intangible information embedded in material objects, there is need to both conceptualize and contextualize them. Just as an object without textual information is less valuable to cultural development, so is information without the actual object. Both information and object are important for cultural development (Prott & O'Keefe, 1992, pp. 308-9). Similarly, if one sees bark cloth and has no cultural information about it, bark cloth will not hold much meaning for them, just as if one had the knowledge without ever seeing the bark cloth. Both the bark cloth and the related information are needed for one to make meaning of them. It is this dual information that prompts cultural development.

It is, therefore, important that inquiry into material culture searches beyond the superficial layers of individual objects and looks between the objects and people for interconnected meanings (Tilley, 1989, p. 188).The people live the stories that connect them to the objects. In the case of bark cloth, it is the people who are involved with it that live the stories that others use to connect them to the object. In this inquiry, for instance, I approached people because of their involvement with bark cloth. It is through these stories found between the people and objects that ideas, beliefs and meanings are interjected (Grassby, 2005, p. 595). It is from these people's stories of experience with bark cloth, that I was able to illustrate the existing interrelationship between the tangible and intangible elements of bark cloth. People bestow their ideas, beliefs, attitudes and meanings onto objects during the creation, acquisition or utilization processes of material objects. It is not just the physicality of the object that produces meaning but the underlying significance inherent in the beliefs and perceptions contained in the object. This significance lies in the energy transmitted to the object from the cultural conceptions

in the human brain obtained through social interactions over a period of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981), and expressed in the form of stories. Some of the beliefs, perceptions and cultural conceptions contained in the bark cloth were arrived at through the people's stories of experience and if they had not shared this information, I probably would have no other way of illustrating the tangible-intangible interrelationship around bark cloth.

The meanings resulting from the interaction process with objects enables people to negotiate between interpersonal relations and their environments (Attfield, 2000, p. 75). In this study for instance, my participants interacted with bark cloth and the meanings resulting from that interaction influenced how they interacted with others and their environments. For some of them it meant passing on the cultural knowledge they possessed to their children through cultural activities, and for others it meant planting many bark cloth trees to ensure a sufficient source of bark cloth. It is through the same negotiations that people are able to find meaning in the objects, especially those involved in the negotiations. Ironically, when things exist naturally in the environment without any human interference, they may not provide sufficient meaning. But any human intervention, either by using objects in their natural state or modifying them for use, qualifies material objects to be known as material culture. However, when people eventually come into contact with these things either through creation, use, collection, modification of the artifact or even observation, they assign meanings to them (Fiore, Kimle and Moreno, 1996; Reid, 2005). Therefore, the object will contain messages which can only be deciphered by those that get into contact with it and, as Rogan (1996) writes, "no artifact has any other life than the lives we give them" (p. 60.) The lives we give

objects are expressed in the form of lived stories of experience, thus clothing the object with intangible meaning.

For this inquiry, therefore, I was interested in the lived stories of experiences of various individuals with bark cloth. As a form of material culture, bark cloth is a tangible expression of culture but it is the people's stories of experience with bark cloth that bestow it with intangible qualities. The stories are intangible in nature but they tell of a tangible object, bark cloth. As part of material cultural heritage, bark cloth can neither be classified separately under only the tangible or the intangible because the two are so enmeshed and intertwined. This inquiry serves to illustrate how material culture accentuates the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible, by demonstrating that people's stories of experience can be used to provide intangible information about tangible objects. In the next chapter, I describe how I used narrative inquiry in the data collection process and in the analysis of the data.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a general overview of narrative inquiry, a data collection and analytic method which was employed in this inquiry. My aim in this inquiry was to obtain lived stories of experience with bark cloth from various individuals in Buganda – Central Uganda, and how these experiences brought out the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth as material culture. In order to obtain these peoples' stories of their experiences, I drew from narrative inquiry, a qualitative research approach that focuses on narratives of experience as both the method and phenomena (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The field texts (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) obtained from the inquiry were used to construct the narrative accounts in chapter four. From a further analysis of these narrative accounts, I drew illustrations of how experiencing bark cloth accentuates the interrelationship between its tangible and intangible aspects as discussed in chapter five.

3.2 Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define narrative inquiry as a way of studying people's experiences when experience is understood as a narrative composition. Arguing from this standpoint, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) see narrative inquiry as comprising both the phenomenon under study and the methodology for studying the phenomenon. Narrative inquiry allowed me to access and interpret various individual's lived stories of experience with bark cloth, in order to make sense of the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth as material cultural heritage. However,

before describing why and how I employed narrative inquiry in this study, I will first provide a brief overview of what the inquiry process entails. Narrative inquiry is the study of experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Studying individuals' lived and told stories is the best way of understanding experience as these narratives are representations of one's past life experiences (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). When people tell stories, they give legibility to life (Frank, 2002) as they help to make the lived experiences meaningful to themselves and others (Moen, 2006, p. 5). However, stories are fluid in nature as they, like experiences, are always under construction, within physical and social contexts (p. 5). In my inquiry, I asked individuals to tell their stories as a way to access their lived stories of experience with bark cloth. These stories then became field texts (data) for the inquiry, because, it was through them that I was able to reflect on how the interrelationship between tangible and intangible aspects of material cultural heritage became manifest in and through bark cloth.

Gergen (2000) describes narratives as co-constructions and joint constructions that involve more than one person. In the research process, both the researcher and the participant become co-constructors of the narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Moen (2006) points out that meaning and understanding emerge from interaction of voices through dialogue with each other (p. 3). Thus multiple voices are presented in people's stories and in the narrative accounts (p. 5). In the next section I describe why narrative inquiry was used as a method of inquiry in my study.

3.3 Why narrative inquiry for this particular study?

Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) advanced four themes in their attempt to justify narrative inquiry as a methodology. First of all, they explain that in narrative inquiry, the focus on story is actually a focus on words as a source of research data. The participants' telling of their lived by experiences in their words prevents the researcher from imposing meaning on what the participants are actually saying. Secondly, taking this stance underscores the relational experience between the researcher and the researched. As a result, both the researcher and the participants change by learning from the research process. Thirdly, narrative inquiry values specific experiences in specific places with specific people because focusing on particular experiences provides in-depth understanding of those experiences. As such, instead of using the findings to make generalized statements, they use those specific experiences to inform themselves when they encounter similar circumstances. Finally, narrative inquiry acknowledges the existence of multiplicity in ways of comprehending human experience.

3.4 How narrative was used in this inquiry

Since I was interested in studying people's life experiences with bark cloth, I decided that narrative inquiry was a way to respond to my inquiry puzzle (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I began by defining what was puzzling me regarding people's experiences with bark cloth, although I had to be aware that the puzzle was not definite and would continually undergo reformation (p. 124). I framed my research puzzle around how experiencing bark cloth accentuates the interrelationship between its tangible and intangible aspects as material cultural heritage. I decided on bark cloth, a major form of

material culture from Buganda – central Uganda because, as a cultural cloth from that geographic region, I felt that it was not receiving sufficient recognition by the majority of people in that region, and was gradually being substituted by foreign textiles. Additionally, the international recognition by UNESCO that was aimed at safeguarding the loss of the craft of bark cloth making, did not emphasize the linkage between the tangible aspects of bark cloth with the intangible skill of crafting it. As such, the essence of the recognition would not make sense if only the intangible skill of crafting bark cloth was emphasized while its tangibility was not. I, therefore, wanted to hear the stories of experience of those individuals who were involved with bark cloth both at cultural (or traditional) and at more modern levels, to demonstrate the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth. These experiences would also make explicit that safeguarding material cultural heritage necessitates safeguarding both the intangible and tangible elements with emphasis on their interrelatedness.

As I contemplated my research puzzle and approach, I considered the fact that I was thousands of miles away from the people I intended to include in my study. Nevertheless, I felt close to them because I originated from the same cultural and physical place as they did. However, I still felt that identifying participants for my study would not be easy because I had been away from Uganda for almost two years. I was grateful to the internet which provided me with access to Ugandan online newspapers which reported on various stories in which bark cloth was involved (www.newvision.co.ug; www.monitor.co.ug). Some stories were about fashion shows that involved African designers and I found one particular designer who was consistently using bark cloth in her designs. Other articles covered artists, bark cloth makers, etc.

However in December 2005, bark cloth in Uganda received international recognition when it was placed on the 2005 proclamation list of the world's intangible heritage. The proclamation helped me to clarify my puzzle because I felt that the information on the UNESCO website lacked the clarification regarding the interrelatedness between the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth. The result of this proclamation, however, was increased media coverage on bark cloth in Buganda specifically and Uganda generally to some extent. The coverage highlighted some individuals and positions of responsibility regarding bark cloth. I then considered involving these individuals as participants in this inquiry. However, I could not ignore the political and cultural history of Buganda and Uganda which I strongly believed had something to do with the people's involvement with bark cloth.

For this inquiry, I considered having as my participants some of those individuals who were involved with bark cloth both at traditional and more modern levels, many years after bark cloth making and use had been discouraged. I was also concerned that the coverage on bark cloth in Uganda by UNESCO focused on the history of bark cloth in Uganda and the craft of bark cloth making, and ignored the cloth and the users who embodied it with intangible meaning. I also found it contradictory that bark cloth which is tangible in nature, was being "separated" from the intangible craft of making it. I would have expected this particular proclamation to highlight bark cloth making as an example of when the tangible and intangible interweave. I focused my study on emphasizing the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth through studying people's life experiences with bark cloth. I, therefore, decided to have as my participants a bark cloth maker, a bark cloth seller, a bark cloth artifact

maker, a bark cloth artifact seller, a museum conservator, a fashion designer, an artist who painted on bark cloth and a custodian of a cultural site that is draped in bark cloth. I wanted to know what policy makers both in Buganda government and the central government thought about bark cloth, so, considered talking to Buganda government's cultural minister and, a cultural officer from the central government. These, I hoped, would provide information on policies involving bark cloth. I obtained ethical permission to talk to these people and prepared an information sheet (Appendix I) and consent form (Appendix II) for each participant to read and sign before we began the conversations.

3.4.1 The inquiry journey

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that when we go into the inquiry field, we do so in the midst of living our own stories and we find our participants in the midst of living their own stories (pp. 63-64). As I prepared to go into the inquiry field I realized that I was in the midst of living my life as a Master's student, a mother who was also hoping to see her two children after almost two years, and a daughter who was looking forward to reconnecting with a mother she had not seen for a long time. I also needed to decide on which particular individuals out of the categories I had identified, I was going to approach for participation in the study. Before I left for Uganda, I was chatting with a friend of mine and we were sharing our academic experiences. When I told her about my work and my interest in talking to various individuals who were engaged in bark cloth activities, she informed me that she had helped with putting together the UNESCO file on bark cloth making in Uganda. She later sent me an email of some contacts of people in Uganda with whom she had worked. Amongst these was the telephone contact of the

head of the *Ngonge* (otter) clan which is responsible for bark cloth making in Buganda Kingdom and I considered asking him to participate in the study. In addition I had a general idea of some of the other people I intended to approach for my study. I felt comfortable that I had a starting point in the clan head.

After arriving in Kampala, Uganda and sleeping off the jet lag, I called the number I had been given. When the person at the end of the line picked up, I asked for the head of the *Ngonge* clan, because that was the person whose telephone number I thought I had. A male voice answered the phone and asked me why I wanted to talk to the clan head. I briefly explained that I was interested in talking to the clan head about bark cloth. The person at the end of the line asked me to meet him at the museum and he would provide me with more information. I drove to the museum immediately and found out that I was meeting with a conservator. His telephone number in the document was just a contact number. The conservator, to whom I gave the pseudonym Raymond, turned out to be a person with broad experience in assisting various scholars with research on cultural heritage in Buganda and Uganda. He was very willing to participate in my inquiry and offered to assist me with the inquiry. He actually introduced me to some of the participants whom I had originally wanted to approach for participation in my inquiry. Having Raymond at my side helped to ease the transition process and the entry into each participant's inquiry space and the inquiry field generally. Details of how Raymond helped to meet some of the participants are provided in the narrative accounts in chapter four.

3.4.2 Negotiating field entry

As I entered the inquiry field, I was mindful that a narrative inquirer needs to be prepared before entering the field by anticipating what is most salient for the participants relative to their social and cultural location and / or community (Chase, 2005). Since I had decided on my participants because of their involvement with bark cloth, I felt that asking them about how they got involved with bark cloth would be a good starting point. However, not all conversations with the participants started that way, as I had to also consider the contexts in which I found them. In some cases, I made reference to those contexts as entry points into the participants' ongoing lives. I had to constantly negotiate the entry points into the midst of their lives or the entire inquiry relationships and my focus (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). For many of the participants activities related to bark cloth like making it, selling it, making artifacts with it and so on, were part of the contexts within which they lived their lives. In most cases, I used their involvement with bark cloth as the entry point into our conversations, because it appeared that bark cloth was salient to them since they were involved with it. As I continued to make sense of their ongoing life stories, I also had to be conscious of the three dimensional narrative space within which the inquiry was taking place. As a tangible object, bark cloth occupied a certain space in the participants' lives at different times in their lives, and as the participants told their stories, they recalled intangible experiences with bark cloth that they found meaningful. The participants also told stories of experience with bark cloth that involved other people with whom they interacted during their involvement with bark cloth at different times in their lives. In most cases, interacting with other people enabled

the participants to realize how meaningful bark cloth was to them, thus giving their experiences with bark cloth intangible wealth.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expound on the importance of working within a metaphorical three dimensional inquiry space. They advance three concepts,

> …our terms are *personal* and *social* (interaction); *past, present* and *future* (continuity); combined with the notion of *place* (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical *three-dimensional narrative inquiry space*, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third. Using this set of terms, any particular inquiry is defined by this three dimensional space… (p. 50).

These three dimensions are the common places of any narrative inquiry, especially one involving the interrelationship between tangible and intangible elements of material culture. Tangible objects exist in space and can be found in different places at different times. During each of these times, material objects, to be of any significance, require the involvement of people. People assign intangible meanings to these objects depending on the time and place that they interact with the objects and with each other. As such, inquiring into people's experiences with bark cloth is ultimately inquiring into a tangible-intangible relationship that involves people's involvement with bark cloth in various places at different times and with other people.

In my inquiry, I had to be aware of the "temporal dimensions and temporal matters" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50) that made up my participants' experiences. As they told their stories in the present, they frequently travelled back in time to relive certain experiences that occurred at particular moments in their lives. At

some points, they were compelled to project what could happen in the future based on their past and present experiences. Additionally, some of their relived experiences focused on temporal issues like intergenerational experiences with bark cloth, along the continuum of their life stories. The places where I met the participants and had our conversations served as inspiration for negotiating my entry into their ongoing life stories. These places also served as pivotal points from which the participants travelled back and forth as they recalled the places where their lived experiences with bark cloth occurred. This back and forth movement into experiential time and place also enabled the retelling of the social interactions that my participants experienced during their involvement with bark cloth. As they recalled and told their stories, they revealed intangible information for example, of how they valued bark cloth, the skills that they acquired and how they learnt to work with the bark cloth, and generally how they got involved with it. Through interactions with other people in varying contexts, my participants obtained valuable knowledge about bark cloth. Recalling these interactions clarified for my participants the invaluable information about bark cloth they held. Telling the stories related to those interactions revealed how constantly meanings had to be reassigned to bark cloth over the course of their lives. Thus working within the three-dimensional narrative space enabled the uncovering of the intangible information linked to bark cloth as experienced by my participants.

In addition to working within the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative space, I also had to be aware of the factors that influenced the kind of stories that people told about their past experiences. Some of these included current life situations, interpersonal relationships, culture, and the relationship between researcher and participant (Gergen,

2004). These factors determine what is or is not included in the participant's story, depending on the circumstances under which the story is told. As a result the story becomes a reflection of how the participant makes sense of their past life (Crites, 1971) and how comfortable they are to tell their stories at that time. The stories people tell about their lives are flexible depending on when, with whom, and where they are sharing them which leads back to the dimensions of temporality, sociality (personal and social) and place. As the inquirer, I needed to develop the kind of trust that allowed the participant to share his/her stories comfortably knowing that they would be interpreted in responsive ways by the researcher (Coles, 1989, p. 7). However, developing this trust requires continuous negotiation, reevaluation and suppleness coupled with an open mind to the constantly changing landscape (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.71). The stories that the participants eventually told, expressed their embodied knowledge of bark cloth. The time that their involvement with bark cloth occurred gave bark cloth intangible meaning in addition to the places where the interaction took place and with whom they interacted. Thus the three-dimensional narrative space helped to direct our conversations around the notions of time, space and the personal and social.

In Raymond's case, for instance, although I made the first and introductory call, he invited me willingly into the midst of his on going life as a conservator, a researcher, a cultural advocate amongst other roles. He was eager to assist me and he was able to introduce me to prospective participants who he felt fitted the categories of participants I described for my inquiry. However, having Raymond by my side as I negotiated my way into those participants' lives eased the process because they were already acquainted with him. After the introductions, Raymond always drew away to let me go on with my work.

It was then that I realized that I had to do my own negotiations because I was an outsider delving into more personal aspects of the participants' lives that Raymond was probably unaware of. I had to renegotiate my relationships with the participants so that they could trust me enough to share their lived stories. In so doing I had to explain what I was trying to do, many times in many words and these were never the same with any of the participants. However, I had to make an effort to let my participants realize that, although I was conducting the inquiry for my academic purposes, I hoped the outcome might benefit them and I had to negotiate ways of putting that across. The purpose of my inquiry was therefore constantly being negotiated with each conversation and each participant! As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated, "The purposes and what one finds puzzling, change as the research progresses. This happens from day to day and week to week, and it happens over the long haul as narratives are retold, puzzles shift and purposes change" (p. 73). This negotiation continued even well into the writing of this thesis. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also explained, continuously working with the participants and describing what one is doing makes things clearer and shapes the outcome.

3.4.3 The conversations

As already recounted, Raymond was the first participant I approached. In addition to accepting to participate in the inquiry, he also offered to be of assistance in any way I needed. I described to him the other participants I wanted to meet and he offered to introduce me to some people, who, later accepted to participate in the inquiry. These included the ladies who were custodians at Kasubi tombs cultural site, where bark cloth

made up a large part of the architecture, an artist who was using bark cloth as media for his painting, and Buganda's official bark cloth maker. He also proposed that I meet Buganda's cultural minister, who I had already considered approaching. The minister later on accepted to take part in the inquiry. The artist also introduced me to his son who purchased the bark cloth for the painting, and the son connected me to a bark cloth seller who also agreed to be part of the inquiry. In the office of the Minister in charge of culture in the central government, I met with a cultural officer who also accepted to participate in the study. The fashion designer I had read about in the newspapers also accepted to participate in the study when I approached her. The chairperson of a crafts village, who also sold bark cloth artifacts, introduced me to a maker of the artifacts and they both agreed to participate in the inquiry.

I explained to each of the participants with the aid of the information sheet (Appendix I), that I was interested in talking to them because of their involvement with bark cloth in one way or another. After accepting to participate in the study, I provided them with the consent form (Appendix II) which they either both read and signed or, after I read out to them, they provided verbal consent which I recorded on tape. I met the participants where they performed their activities with bark cloth, and some of them let me observe their activities involving bark cloth for a period of about two to four hours. In addition, they let me ask some questions as events unfolded. Before this, they agreed to have at least an hour of conversation with me, although I agreed to talk with them as they went about their activities. For some of the participants who were involved in physical activities with bark cloth, I began by asking how they got involved i those activities. Other questions I asked arose from what the participants shared. As the participants

shared their stories, they sometimes brought out bark cloth-related objects that had special meaning to them. For other participants, I used cues from their responses to my explanation of the inquiry to ask them about their experiences with bark cloth. For one of the ladies at Kasubi, finding her with a piece of bark cloth draped around her shoulders was an opportune starting point for me to ask her about it.

Once I found an entry point into my participants' life stories of experience with bark cloth, I let the participants decide on which experiences to talk about. When they seemed to come to the end of the conversations, I asked for clarification on some statements they had made and asked them if they had any final thoughts for the future of bark cloth. These clarification requests also led to other stories that they shared and as I sought more clarification, more stories came out. When I sensed that my participants were exhausted from the conversations and did not seem to want to proceed, I told them that we would continue from there another time if I developed a hunch or remembered something that needed clarification. I then proceeded to the observation period to see how some of the participants went about their activities involving bark cloth. I noted down some things that they did or said during this time that I felt needed more explanation. For some of them, I was able to return later and get more explanation, and in some instances purchase a few items, to remind me of my experience with the participants.

I used an audio recorder to record the conversations. I transcribed the conversations verbatim and translated those conversations that were conducted in the Luganda language which some of the participants found more comfortable. All participants were given pseudonyms which were used in this thesis. During the observation period after each conversation, I wrote down the description of the setting. I

also noted any extra ideas, reflections and observations that came to mind about the conversations and any emotional shifts that I felt or that my participants had exhibited during the conversations. I continued with this journal writing after the conversations especially for those conversations that did not involve any observation. With the participants' permission, I also took video and photographic recordings of specific activities and features I found interesting and relevant to the inquiry.

3.5 Moving from field texts to research texts

As noted before, narrative inquiry is both a method of studying experience and a phenomenon of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I therefore used the narrative inquiry theoretical methodological frame in the analysis in my study (p. 128). I approached the analysis of my inquiry beginning with the participants' narratives of experience as lived and told. I engaged in several hours of reading and rereading the research transcripts, my field notes, watching the field videos and studying the pictures taken in the field. I continued to study the transcripts, field notes, pictures, videos and the narrative accounts and began to narratively code these by identifying interconnected, interwoven and resonating threads (p. 131). I also recalled the body language of the participants as I listened to the recorded conversations and read through the transcripts and my journal. Additionally, I studied the pictures and videos that I took in the field, with the aim of trying to find any further clues to what the participants made reference to. I then proceeded to compose narrative accounts for each of the participants which are presented in chapter four. These accounts were actually my stories of experience in the field with each participant and the conversations we had. As I composed these accounts, I

also engaged in an analysis of the conversations I had with the participants. I tried to identify what the participants meant by what they said and did regarding their experiences with bark cloth. As I proceeded with further analysis of my participants' experiences with bark cloth in chapter five, I identified resonating threads amongst the participants' stories like, childhood experiences, levels of involvement with bark cloth, reasons for involvement, similarities in view etc. I then categorized these threads under the headings of time/temporality, space/place and the personal and the social, that is, the dimensions of the metaphorical three dimensional space within which narrative inquiries take place Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 120).

I also considered the meaning, social significance and purpose of my participants' lived and told experiences with bark cloth by relating them to UNESCO's taxonomy of cultural heritage as intangible and intangible. Their stories were about bark cloth which is tangible but the experiences they described were ascribing intangible meaning to the bark cloth. Using my participants' stories of experiences with bark cloth, I was able to demonstrate that the participants were embodiments of the bark cloth. Besides wearing it or using it in multiple ways, they also possessed the skills to manipulate it and create meaning, ideas and representations of it. Their stories were intangible expressions of their experiences with the tangible bark cloth. Bark cloth as an example of material culture therefore, contains both tangible and intangible elements that need to be considered interdependently when discussing issues related to material cultural heritage.

By using narrative inquiry as a method of data collection and analysis, I was able to obtain and make sense of my participants' lived stories of experience with bark cloth. Since narrative inquiry is the study of experience, I was able to explore various

individuals' experiences with bark cloth either directly or indirectly through listening to their stories. Drawing from these stories, I was also able to demonstrate that bark cloth though tangible in nature, was embodied with intangible information expressed through people's stories. Therefore, the tangible knowledge cannot be separated from the intangible information when dealing with material culture, because it is experienced both physically and mentally. In the following chapter, I present the narrative accounts of the participants' experiences with bark cloth. Each participant has a section dedicated to them and each account is my interpretation of my interaction with each of the participants.

Chapter Four: Narrative Accounts

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the narrative accounts of the people who participated in this study. These included a conservator, two custodians of a cultural site, a bark cloth maker, a cultural officer, a bark cloth seller, a bark cloth artifact maker, an artifact seller, an artist, a fashion designer and a cultural officer. Through these narrative accounts, which are representations of the conversations I had with my participants, I describe how these people became participants in my study. I also provide a more detailed, descriptive and analytical description of how our interaction transpired and of the conversations I had with them.

4.2 Raymond's story

4.2.1 Meeting Raymond

A week before I left Edmonton for my research in Uganda, a colleague of mine in Toronto who was also on study leave from my university in Uganda emailed me a document on bark cloth in Uganda. Going into the field at that time, I had a sense of the categories of people I wanted to talk to for my research in Uganda but I did not have specific names of my participants and I was quite apprehensive about where I was to start. When my colleague sent that document, she did not know about my concern at this time, but she felt that it would be useful for my research. Indeed it was. The document contained some contact information of a few people involved in bark cloth in Uganda and I took note of one particular telephone contact that had been indicated as that of a bark cloth maker in Buganda. I had come across this name and a corresponding face in the

online newspapers that had broadcast the news that UNESCO recognized bark cloth making in Uganda as one of the World's intangible heritages in 2005. I felt a bit of relief when I saw this particular contact as I scanned through the document on the plane on my way to Uganda. I decided that this was going be my starting point.

After recovering from the jet lag I consulted the document again and, using the telephone contact I had selected, I made the call. Initially I did not know what I was going to say when the call was answered, but when the other party picked up, I did not have to think about what to say. The words came rushing to the tip of my tongue. After the formal greetings were exchanged, I asked to speak with Kaboggoza which was the contact name indicated on the document. The male voice at the other end of the line paused, and after a few seconds that seemed like minutes to me since I felt my research depended on this call, the voice informed me that Kaboggoza was unavailable. A dreadful feeling came over me as I wondered how I was going to progress from this point. I felt as though my initial plans were shattered. The voice then asked me who I was, and, I very cautiously explained that I was a student who was interested in doing some research with this Kaboggoza. The voice then asked me what exact information I required. However, by this time I was wondering whether I was about to release information to someone who would have no use for it, or whether I had already said too much. I paused, and then the voice asked me if we could meet at the Uganda Museum and find out how he would be of help. I breathed a sigh of relief. Because I felt that if this person was working at the museum then maybe he would be able to help me. With my hopes somewhat restored I drove my mother's car immediately to the Uganda Museum. On arrival, I parked in one of the cool shades under the big trees along the museum

driveway. I called the number again and informed the voice that I was waiting outside. He informed me that he would be outside in a short while. I remained in the car and kept my eyes on the museum entrance. Moments later a middle-aged gentleman came out and walked towards the car. The voice now had a face.

After we exchanged greetings and names, I explained why I was there and he expressed willingness to assist me so I opened the passenger's door and let him in. Sitting on the passenger seat, he informed me that the contact in the document was his and not Kaboggoza who was an old man who lived in some village, and was the royal bark cloth maker of Buganda. It was just a contact number for Kaboggoza. Raymond also informed me that Kaboggoza was a title given to the chief bark cloth maker of Buganda and that he would take me to this Kaboggoza if I so wished. I then informed him that I was also interested in talking to other people who were involved with bark cloth including a museum conservator and he appeared very eager to participate in the study. For about an hour we chatted about traveling, studies and bark cloth and as we talked, I realized that Raymond had a very pleasant personality and was very informed regarding bark cloth. He offered to be of assistance in any way, including taking me to the various people I had expressed interest in talking to. I referred to him later as my self appointed research assistant. I felt immediate relief and we both agreed that he would be the first participant so he could tell me about his experiences with bark cloth. This would also give him a sense of what I was working on which would benefit our subsequent visits to the other participants. I gave him my telephone contact, the research information sheet and consent form to go through before our next meeting. We also agreed on a day to meet. I bade him farewell and went home quite excited.

On the day of our agreed meeting, I called Raymond and he told me the time he would be in his office to which he gave me directions. At the agreed time, I drove to the museum and went to his office where I found him waiting for me. We exchanged greetings and he asked me where I wanted to start and whether he could use the local Luganda language or English. I told him that I wanted to tour the display cases first and see what they had on bark cloth and that he could use any of the two languages he felt comfortable with. I also asked him of I could video and tape record the tour and take pictures. He agreed and led me to the display area. He took me to a small waist-high display case which had different types and sizes of mallets, parts of fig trees from which the bark cloth is made and plain pieces of bark cloth. He also showed me large display cases which had large pieces of bark cloth that had printed designs on them and others that had been patched together neatly (Appendix III). I also saw a lifelike image of a historical personality who had been draped in bark cloth that had been sewn in a more modern style of a skirt and blouse. Raymond also showed me another type of bark cloth that was black which he said was made by the people from Busoga by rolling the finished bark cloth in black soil. I also noticed that most of the showcases were lined with bark cloth but again they seemed to be coated with layers of dust. It seemed as though not a lot of cleaning of the cases was done and I wondered how much conservation theory was put into practice here. I asked Raymond about this and he informed me that being a government project, not a lot of money was put into ensuring the cleaning, temperature control and so on. Essentially, once something was in the display case, it was locked up and that was it. I felt something needed to be done about this especially considering the negative environmental effects on artifacts but it seemed like a more sensitive topic and I

did not wish to tamper with it. All along, I took pictures and recorded the tour both on video and audio tape.

4.2.2 Raymond's child hood experiences with bark cloth

After touring the various displays which took us about forty-five minutes, I asked Raymond if he still had time to share his experiences with bark cloth since it was about eleven o'clock in the morning. He informed me that he had a meeting at two o'clock so he still had some time on his hands. I asked him where he felt we could talk comfortably. Raymond picked up a couple of chairs from a nearby room and asked me to follow him. He led me around the museum building to the back which had many tall trees and a great shade from the sweltering sun and yet produced a cool breeze as the wind got caught in the branches. The place had a serene atmosphere save for the birds that kept chirping in the trees and Raymond informed me that he always used this haven when he wanted to do some reading or reflection. We settled down and I explained my research again and informed him that I needed to get his consent. He found this very amusing because he felt that his position as a conservator was to provide information to those who sought it. I explained how personal some information could get and that such information could be disseminated which he may not be happy about. He indicated that he had understood everything on the information sheet and then signed the consent form.

I then reminded Raymond that he was free to use either English or Luganda for our interview. He agreed. I noticed that during our prior exchanges, he had exhibited a keen interest on bark cloth, so, I asked him how he had developed this interest in bark cloth. He informed me that his interest in bark cloth developed gradually as he became involved in working with one of Uganda's heritage sites – Kasubi tombs during his early

youth. Kasubi tombs is one of Buganda's cultural and tourist sites where four of Buganda's great kings and some of their family members were buried. The tombs are one of Uganda's four heritages that were declared by UNESCO as part of the World's greatest treasures and one of the tombs' major features is a colossal hut in which the four King's were buried. As people came to visit the site, they interviewed Raymond about Buganda and its objects including bark cloth, which intrigued him and stimulated his interests in his heritage. This interest developed into a career and by the time I met him, he was so engrossed in work related mostly to cultural heritage and traditional conservation practices.

As a child, Raymond's experiences with bark cloth were considerably significant because of his societal status but he did not feel their impact as such as an adult. He was born into a family where some of his siblings were twins. In his family, the "twins" (the umbilical stumps of all the children in his family) were kept in a special cupboard and wrapped in bark cloth. As a child, Raymond experienced the initiation of twins in a Kiganda ceremony known as *okwalula abalongo* during which bark cloth is used as the ceremonial regalia and floor covering on which the ceremony takes place. Traditionally in Buganda, having twins or being a twin is sacred and all the children in a family with twins are referred to as "twins" and they and their parents were given special names. Raymond was therefore a twin by virtue of being born in a family with twins and he was part of the initiation of twins in his family. During his early years too, Raymond was installed as an heir in another ceremony which features bark cloth in a process own as *okusumika*. During this ceremony, the clan leader identifies the heir by placing a large piece of bark cloth around their shoulders. During this time, the heir stands or sits on

another piece of bark cloth while other people usually elders approach the heir and give them wisdom to help them in the new journey as they take up new responsibilities. As a child, Raymond may not have given bark cloth a great deal of thought but considering it as a grown man, he felt that the use of bark cloth during such ceremonies was a way of authenticating those rites of passage. Use of bark cloth as the traditional cloth during these traditional ceremonies and not any other cloth was an overt way of emphasizing that the particular ceremony was actually traditional. He believed that the absence of bark cloth in such ceremonies distinctive of Buganda culture and traditions would cause any real Muganda to question where they were. He also realized that it was not just about bark cloth since many other cultural traditions or ceremonies mandated the presence of other material objects besides bark cloth like cowry shells, gourds of local brew, spears, etc.

4.2.3 Raymond's work and educational experiences with bark cloth

As Raymond grew up into a young man, he was not preoccupied with the place of bark cloth in his life. It was more taken for granted until he started working at Kasubi tombs as a tour guide. After failing to proceed to A' level (i.e advanced level or senior high school) due to lack of financial support, following completion of his O' level (ordinary level or junior high school), Raymond felt that his education career had come to an end. His luck changed when an uncle informed him of a recruitment scheme that was taking place in the then Ministry of Culture & Community Development in the department of Museums and Antiquities. On being recruited, Raymond was assigned to work as a tour guide in Kasubi tombs, which was an opportunity he embraced with zeal. The other tour guides would wait outside the tombs to receive the site visitors and show

them around informing them about the tombs and Buganda's history. That particular story was shared by Raymond later as we arrived at Kasubi tombs where he accompanied me on my first visit to the ladies who were keeping vigil on the dead Kings. He had found it uncomfortable to share during an earlier meeting. Nevertheless, Raymond had not given much thought to the significance of his earlier job as a tour guide until a particular incident occurred which totally changed his attitude. He stated that the event was clearly imprinted clearly in his memory and he shared it during our conversation. In that incident a gentle man found him talking to a female graduate in Kasubi and the two seemed to know each other. The gentleman asked the lady in a worried tone what she was doing in Kasubi and if she needed his help in finding a job. Raymond felt that the tone used by the gentle man was one that demeaned what he was doing and he was deflated. After that incident, his job as a tour guide became an uneasy experience and he started thinking that maybe such positions were taken up by people who were failures in life and could not find good jobs. It felt as if what he was doing was not a job. But at his level of education, Raymond saw himself with not many employment opportunities and resigned himself to his work as a tour guide. Musing over that experience during our conversation, he confessed that had he been a graduate at that time he probably would not have got involved in such work and would most probably not be where he was.

Raymond persevered in that despondent situation which gradually improved as he slowly went up the ranks until he was eventually placed in charge of Uganda's heritage sites as site conservator, a position he held up until the time I met him. As site conservator, he was responsible for ensuring the constant renovation of the cultural sites including Kasubi which were built using locally available materials like wood, straw and

bark cloth. These materials needed constant replacement due to environmental degradation. The appreciation of Raymond's hard work by promoting him elevated his self esteem as it came with its share of breakthroughs. Raymond was able to undergo rigorous training by several international organizations on the traditional conservation practices of cultural heritage and eventually he received sponsorship to further his education to the level of a graduate. Raymond's educational training opportunities involved both international and domestic workshops, conferences and seminars which enlightened him and boosted his interest in furthering his career in cultural heritage conservation. The elevation to a higher status position coupled with the furthering of his education and his international exposure gave him more self confidence in what he was doing.

During his education training, Raymond experienced life-changing situations that affected his general outlook to cultural heritage and erased the negative feelings that had been nurtured by that negative comment in Kasubi. The training, workshops and upgrading programs afforded him the opportunity to visit several countries including Kenya, South Africa and Italy amongst others. In fact during my field research he was preparing to go to Norway for another short course. During these programs, Raymond interacted with several individuals from various parts of the world and was astounded by their loyalty to their own cultural heritage and resolute determination to conserve it. This was because where he was from, involvement in cultural traditions was considered archaic and backward and those involved were seen as low in status. But as these people shared their personal experiences he became aware of their deep commitment and sensed their pride in ensuring continuity of their cultural traditions and passing these down the

generations. He felt that these training experiences also enriched him with cultural knowledge from various parts of the world and introduced him to graduates and other highly qualified people in the field. Through these experiences Raymond realized that these people's goals differed completely from what he and his colleagues in Uganda were after. Initially for him and his colleagues these were fun trips, opportunities to go abroad and in Buganda it was all about the Kingdom but for the people he met in the programs, it was all about revisiting and reclaiming their lost traditions. This experience changed his outlook towards his own cultural traditions and stirred nostalgic feelings in him which generated a strong desire in him to also preserve, protect and promote his cultural heritage.

Raymond also noticed that many of the people from other countries that he met during those educational programs were highly educated and had pursued even graduate studies in various areas in conservation of cultural heritage. These people's love for their cultural heritage reminded him of how working at Kasubi tombs as a tour guide was looked down upon and yet it had equipped him with cultural knowledge regarding his own heritage. He felt so much remorse towards the attitudes that his people shared and which he too had shared and felt during his working experience towards engaging in cultural issues which was considered to be of low status. As he told me his story, he wondered if his children would appreciate what he was doing and continue with it. He also shared with me his experience with some young people I had met him with as I arrived for the interview. He said those young people were on their way to Sweden to showcase aspects of Buganda's culture and were consulting with him on what they were to present. He advised them to present on cultural activities related to dressing in

Buganda especially to the male traditional outfit known as the *kanzu*, a long white tunic which was worn with bark cloth slung over one shoulder. He believed that the consultation would help to prepare them for what was out there and ensure that they presented the information regarding their cultural traditions appropriately. He felt that the desire to help the younger generations learn and help them appreciate and be part of their heritage was inculcated in him during that education experience which equipped him with the skills and knowledge. He also felt privileged by the exposure which stirred in him the courage to exert himself more in the field of traditional conservation practices in all possible ways and to make an impact since he was the very first person in Uganda to undergo that training. Consequently, he recommended more people especially graduates to undergo similar training to what he had gone through so as to have partners in demystifying cultural heritage. The exposure and renewed attitude equipped him with the impetus and confidence to handle his conservation duties.

A project that Raymond recalls vividly as cultural site conservator was one in which he was involved in the supervision of the renovation of the major hut in Kasubi tombs site which was preceded by extensive training from three international projects. By the time Raymond embarked on this project he felt confident enough to advise and direct his colleagues and to make appropriate decisions regarding the best approach on the project for the best results. This assignment provided him with the opportunity to access the entire hut including the areas where no one was allowed. He went into those areas with several questions at the back of his mind, like why people were prohibited from going there, what was there and so on. Approaching this experience with an informed perspective enabled him to confirm a lot of what he had read about the Kings being

buried in more than four thousand pieces of bark cloth. This was explained by the massive tombs covered with bark cloth in which the Kings were said to be buried. This realization astounded him as he became conscious of the possible legitimacy of that information which had stated that it was believed that each county had contributed at least one piece of bark cloth towards a King's burial. The more bark cloth a county contributed, the more it demonstrated its allegiance to the fallen Kings and hoped to gain favor from the rest of the Royal family. This extraordinarily extravagant and yet regal use of bark cloth confirmed for Raymond how significant bark cloth was for the people of Buganda. He saw bark cloth as the most pertinent shroud that befitted their fallen monarch and the importance of honoring the dead by burying them in several pieces of bark cloth. This gesture was a way for the people of Buganda to claim ownership of bark cloth as their cloth. Nevertheless, he expressed his consternation at the progressive increase in awareness, exposure and education amongst the people of Buganda. He felt apprehensive that as people became more educated and involved in research they would question the size of those colossal graves and proceed to excavate them in order to ascertain their contents. He seemed quite confident when he said, "let me tell you that they will be exhumed, however not now… there will come a time when everybody is educated, well traveled and things are different…They will do it". As an individual Raymond also questioned the size of the graves and their contents.

4.2.4 Raymond's research experiences

The education and exposure experiences further influenced the way Raymond perceived and questioned his own cultural heritage with Kasubi as a starting point. These questions became more explicit for him when during his service at Kasubi up until the

time I met him, several people, especially tourists and other researchers (mainly from abroad), had approached him and consulted with him as they sought answers to their own questions regarding various aspects of Buganda's heritage. The researchers explored an array of topics ranging from Buganda objects and their uses, traditional medicine men practices, to African vampires. Raymond found himself actively involved as a research assistant in several of these projects, and, what he found significant in them as we talked, was that bark cloth featured quite significantly in all of them. He realized that almost all cultural ceremonies and practices involved the use of bark cloth as the required garb and as the floor covering on which the ceremony was conducted. The array of objects used in the ceremonies included bark cloth as one of them and as the shroud for the other objects. Reminiscing on these experiences during our interview, Raymond expressed that engaging in these projects enabled him to pursue his new-found interest in his cultural heritage and most importantly bark cloth and it was an opportunity for him to find answers to his own questions. He realized the significance of bark cloth as an agent of Buganda's cultural traditions. He felt that dressing or using bark cloth was a way of expressing the love, belief and commitment one had to their cultural traditions.

One of the research experiences that Raymond recalled vividly involved a visit to a traditional medicine man. During this project Raymond was assisting a *mzungu* (a term used for a white person), an anthropologist who was also a medical doctor and was training medical doctors. This anthropologist-doctor was interested in finding out how medicine men helped their patients to recover from their illnesses. He intended to compare the modern and traditional methods of treating patients. Raymond accompanied the anthropologist-doctor to a traditional medicine man who took them through the

treatment processes that he used on his patients. Raymond observed ardently the material objects that the medicine man used during the treatment process and realized that he used bark cloth exclusively in the entire procedure. The patient and medicine man wore bark cloth and sat on it and all activities involved like cutting and bleeding a chicken, pouring out the cowry shells before summoning the spirits, were done on bark cloth. During our conversation, Raymond assured me of his conviction that no medicine man performed a procedure without bark cloth. He felt that the medicine men used bark cloth during their procedures as a symbol of cultural conservation and a way of authenticating themselves in the eyes of those who sought their assistance. Since traditional healing was a traditional practice, use of the traditional cloth was a way of proving that the healer was conversant with what he was doing. Raymond also explained that the traditional healing process entailed the beckoning of the spirits of the forefathers who wore bark cloth when they lived in the physical world. He believed that the bark cloth was used during the traditional healing procedure and worn by both the patient and the healer because the ancestral spirits had the memory of the bark cloth and it was the only way they could identify the participants and the procedure. He supposed that failure to appropriately involve bark cloth in the procedures or involvement of foreign objects like shoes or foreign clothing may hinder the spirits from recognizing the participants, and ultimately would jeopardize the healing procedure. Consequently, the medicine man would use the lack, inadequate or misuse of bark cloth in the procedure as an excuse if the patient did not experience healing. For Raymond, considering the use of bark cloth in this healing procedure at a more informed stage shifted from being a tangible object to an intangible agent which connected the physical world to the spiritual one.

4.2.5 Raymond as an advocate for the tangible-intangible interrelationship

Raymond's research, educational training and work experiences provided him with the opportunity and expertise to be involved in the research that helped put together the UNESCO file about bark cloth in Uganda. The information in that file enabled the declaration of the craft of bark cloth making in Uganda as one of the 43 Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity in 2005. This experience for Raymond enabled him to reconsider the importance of bark cloth and the creation or production process. He realized that bark cloth had actually not been modified since people in Uganda first started making it. Telling me about his involvement in collecting information on bark cloth for the UNESCO file reminded him of an earlier research project. During that project, Raymond had assisted someone who was researching Buganda's history and they found out about Kaboggoza from the *Ngonge* clan who had discovered bark cloth over six hundred years ago. This clan had been recognized by the King who gave them about 100 acres of land on which to develop the craft and they were placed in charge of making bark cloth for the royal family. Raymond visited the family that was charged for making bark cloth for the King and confirmed the information. When Raymond and his team were filling the UNESCO file he felt like an expert since he had already been involved in the collection of some of the information needed in an earlier study. Since they already had information on how and where bark cloth was made, they focused on how bark cloth was invented, where it came from and the areas where bark cloth was mostly produced. For Raymond, this was a very prestigious experience because his involvement was at a more informed level and he was able to articulate the significance of bark cloth more distinctly. It was also a proud moment for him since the

information was going to be broadcast at an international level which was an opportunity for some of Buganda's cultural heritage to be relayed and accessed. The experience also gave him an opportunity to learn more about bark cloth in other parts of Uganda as filling the file entailed collecting information regarding bark cloth from various parts of Uganda and yet his prior knowledge was basically based in Buganda.

A controversial issue discussed with Raymond during our conversation was the fact that since its discovery the process of making bark cloth and the appearance of final product after making it had not been altered. As a person interested in conserving traditional customs and material culture, Raymond felt that preserving this originality of bark cloth was a desired attribute. He felt that any changes in the production process of bark cloth in the form of introduction of machinery or genetic modification of the trees would gradually lead to the total extinction of the original ficus trees from which bark cloth was made thus causing the extinction of bark cloth. He further intimated that this was an issue that had arisen during the filling of the UNESCO file but they had to ensure that the main issue was sustainability and not over commercialization. Consequently, they stressed the protection of the trees from which bark cloth was obtained which would in turn prevent the extinction of bark cloth since commercialization was believed to lead to extinction of the original. Seeing some bark cloth makers working with their children during some of his research expeditions encouraged him because it was a desirable way of getting the younger generations introduced to the original bark cloth making methods and involved in ensuring continuity of the craft. He was however concerned about how the rest of the public regarded his kind of work which he said involved a lot of involvement in traditional methodologies. He felt that he was seen as though he was

going backwards to the ancient times which did not seem to appeal to most people. Even as a graduate, working at a place like Kasubi tombs would still raise many questions amongst peers who would have thought that may be one failed to get employment elsewhere and went to Kasubi as a last resort. He felt that these attitudes were very negative not only to his kind of work but also to the continuity of cultural traditions.

For Raymond, the reinstatement of the institution of Buganda Kingdom was an opportunity for ensuring the protection and preservation of bark cloth in Buganda so the future generations would be able to appreciate the creativity of their ancestors like him. Additionally, Kaboggoza's role as the royal bark cloth maker was directly linked to the Kingdom because he was symbolically responsible for clothing the people especially the monarchs. Raymond saw Kaboggoza's role as dependent on the existence of Buganda Kingdom and with it, bark cloth. He felt that if the Kingdom ceased to exist, so would Kaboggoza's symbolic role and ultimately bark cloth. Raymond expressed his disapproval towards some of the shifts in the use of bark cloth, that were occurring such as the dead being dressed in suits or use of other fabrics during burial. This he considered to be a threat to bark cloth but held on to the hope that the Kiganda tradition of making bark cloth for the King which was Kaboggoza's role ensured the preservation of bark cloth as a major form of Buganda's material culture. Raymond felt that this preservation of bark cloth and related activities would only happen as long as there was an institution that respected it, the institution of Buganda Kingdom. He also asserted that bark cloth had a major role in the Kingdom of Buganda, it accentuated the power of the Baganda and their Kingdom but most importantly it symbolized Kiganda identity.

Raymond's experiences with bark cloth inspired him to consider it not only as part of Buganda's culture but also as a key element of Buganda's cultural traditions and any attitudes towards bark cloth, he felt were directed to Buganda's cultural heritage in general. Experiencing bark cloth as a child did not seem so meaningful to him and lack of adequate education and exposure made him consider his own cultural heritage as inferior. However, after receiving some more education and international experience which entailed interacting with people from several parts of the world and realizing how their own cultural heritage was to them, Raymond reassessed his own attitudes and developed an appreciation for his own culture. Additionally, engaging in research activities enlightened him more and eventually he developed a desire to protect, preserve and promote Buganda's cultural traditions. His vast experience was so valuable for my study that he offered to assist me and introduced me to several of my participants who received me readily because they trusted him and so they trusted me. We continued discussing the place of bark cloth in Buganda during other visits and even after I left the field. More questions seemed to arise as we did so and our discussions continued.

4.3 Mary's and Margaret's stories

4.3.1 Meeting Mary and Margaret

Although I had never been to Kasubi tombs where the Buganda Kings were buried, I had heard and read a lot about UNESCO's declaration of Kasubi tombs as one of the World's Heritage sites. I had also read and heard about it being one of Uganda's tourist attractions and how it was draped exclusively in bark cloth, and about the women who lived in the bark cloth clad hut in which the Kings were buried. I considered those

women to be culturally informed since they were engaged in that cultural role so I envisioned that they could provide me with some explanations around the bark cloth in the hut. I wanted to know what it was like for them to live in such an environment and how the environment influenced their roles. I decided I would talk to one to hear her story about her world around bark cloth. Earlier on, Raymond had informed me of his involvement at Kasubi, and I had informed him about my wish to speak to one of the women at Kasubi as a research participant. He was excited because, according to his observation, people rarely talked to those women since they were considered the Kings' servants. He hoped that my study would help to give them a place to have their voices heard.

Raymond, who had worked in Kasubi for a long period of time, accompanied me to Kasubi tombs. He was confident the women trusted him. I felt that with his research and work experience in relation to Kasubi, he would enrich the conversations I would be able to have with the women. I was also hopeful that since many people went to Kasubi for research and touring purposes, I would be able to get at least one woman as a research participant. On the agreed day, I picked Raymond up from the Museum and drove to Kasubi tombs. While I had never been to Kasubi tombs, I had gone past it a couple of times, so I knew where it was located. On arrival at the tombs, we left the car outside the main site and walked towards the entrance. The entrance was a slightly dilapidated hut made of mud and wattle and thatched with straw. There was a pathway through it and as we went through, Raymond told me that the hut was known as *Bujjabukula*. The pathway through the hut led into a large compound surrounded by several iron sheet roofed hut. Outside the entry hut was a long path leading directly to a very large grass thatched hut

known as *Muzibu Azaala* M*panga* in which the fallen Kings were buried. The main hut was generally designed using traditional architecture and materials, which were basically wooden poles, mud and wattle and straw thatching. As we approached the main hut, I noticed that the thatch on the main hut was being replaced in some areas, so I took a few minutes to observe how the grass was wrapped and placed on the roof while Raymond talked to the men who were replacing the thatching. A few moments later, Raymond led me inside the main hut. We had to take off our shoes before going inside.

Upon entering, I was overwhelmed by the actual size of the hut and the magnificence of the architecture. The roof was high and the walls were draped with very large pieces of bark cloth which were also used to divide the space in the hut. The bark cloth was draped from the ceiling to the floor and wrapped around the massive poles that supported the roof. The area directly in front of the door had four rows of spears each with a photograph of the King who was buried there. Behind the spears, which I later learned were the actual spears the Kings used in their battles, there were photographs and four low pseudo graves and large pieces of bark cloth shielding the actual graves in which the Kings were buried from sight. The floor was covered with mats and four baskets were laid out in front of the pseudo graves symbolizing the four Kings buried there. I had read that visitors were expected to put some "gifts" in the form of money into those baskets, so I paid homage to the fallen Kings by putting money in all four baskets and sat down on a mat beside the two women we found inside. I had read that each of the four graves had a woman charged with keeping vigil. I also noticed that the two ladies we found inside were seated on one side of the hut. I was later informed by Mary, that two women sat on each side of the hut in which their King was buried. The aura in the hut

was overwhelming and reminded me of the history I had read and heard about Buganda Kings and Kasubi tombs. The two women we found inside, recognized Raymond instantly and welcomed us. I noticed that the younger one had a piece of bark cloth draped around her shoulders. I immediately decided that I would ask her to become a participant. We then exchanged greetings and Raymond explained to the women why I was there. Although I wanted to talk to only one, it appeared that would not be possible since they worked in pairs and I did not wish to offend any one. I gave them the details of my research and requested their participation. They said they understood the purpose of my work and agreed to participate. I obtained their verbal consent on the recorder. The women expressed disappointment with the few people who had consulted them in the past because they did not tell them what became of the interviews. I chose not to make any promises in case I could not meet them. Raymond then went outside to oversee the men who were thatching and left me to continue with the interviews.

4.3.2 On cultural duty

I began by asking the women who they were in that place and Mary, who had the bark cloth around her, informed me she was known as *Mulema*. The other lady, Margaret, also said she was known as *Mulema* which meant "wife to the King" and they then identified the King for whom they were responsible. They were there as caretakers of the Kings, keeping vigil and ready to respond to the Kings' demands. As they talked, the women referred to the dead Kings as if they were alive, which confirmed a comment Raymond made earlier that is, that a King does not die. As I wondered how they came to be in that place, Mary informed me that she became one of the fallen King's wives when she succeeded her late aunt who she had never met. Margaret explained that being a wife

to the late Kings was a cultural role that one inherited from a dead aunt or sister who was a wife to one of the late Kings of Buganda. The fallen Kings referred to in this study were four of Buganda's famous Kings who were buried in Kasubi tombs in the major hut *Muzibu Azaala Mpanga*. These were Muteesa I and II, Mwanga and Chwa. Every month, four women left their families and embraced these culturally assigned roles to keep vigil for each of the Kings as a wife for two months a year. These were Mary and Margaret's roles.

Mary had been on cultural duty as one of the King's wives for eight years following the death of her late aunt from whom she inherited that position. During her installation as her aunt's successor, a piece of bark cloth had been placed around her shoulders to symbolize her transition into the new status, and she had treasured that piece of bark cloth from that day and carried it around with her. It was the same piece of bark cloth that I found draped around her shoulders. She told me that covering herself with that piece of bark cloth served the functional role of making her feel warmer than if she used a sweater but most importantly and symbolically, it made her feel connected to her ancestors especially her late aunt. She felt an obligation to take care of, and use, that particular piece of bark cloth because she felt happy and peaceful knowing that she was connecting with her late aunt's spirit which reciprocally recognized her as the heir.

Margaret, on the other hand, succeeded her elder sister and had embraced the role of *Mulema* for about twenty-three years. Although she did not have a piece of bark cloth to show for it like Mary, Margaret asserted that bark cloth was a harmless cloth that was worn and used by their forefathers and was embraced by everyone in Buganda regardless of their social status. Bark cloth was worn by both Kings and their servants and was also

used during all traditional rites of passage. However the introduction of Christianity in the late nineteenth century discouraged the cultural traditions, including activities involving bark cloth. Kasubi tombs survived that era because it was the epitome of traditional Buganda architecture and materials and represented a lot of what Buganda culture stood for. It was also a famous tourist attraction site because of its representation of Kiganda cultural traditions and values, so every effort was made to preserve its cultural aura. UNESCO's inscription of Kasubi tombs on the world's heritage list in 2001 emphasized the cultural significance of the tombs that needed to be preserved.

4.3.3 Childhood memories of bark cloth

Although she was the older of the two women, Margaret was born in the city and therefore did not see much bark cloth being used there except as shroud for the dead. However, she spent some of her childhood years with her grandmother in the village. She described her grandmother's bed as a heap of bark cloth. That intrigued Margaret because she thought a few beddings were sufficient but when her grandmother passed away, she was wrapped in the bark cloth that had been on her bed. It appeared that her grandmother was preparing herself for the possibility of death, so she ensured that as an elderly person, she had shrouds that would be used to wrap her after her death. During her stay with her grandmother, Margaret was horrified to be given bark cloth beddings. She was used to the cotton bed sheets that she used in the city where she was born. She resorted to wetting her beddings almost every night but, instead of taking them out to dry, she would fold over the wet part and sleep on a dry section, wet that and fold it over until the beddings gave off an offensive stench and were rotting and in shreds. She laughed as she told that

story and shook her head, probably because she realized how foolish such behavior was since she was later found out. She did not even get the much cherished cotton bed sheets.

Margaret's story prompted Mary to tell of her experience with bark cloth as bedding; Mary's grandmother, with whom she lived as a child, also had a heap of bark cloth as bedding and Mary too, slept in bark cloth bedding. Unlike Margaret, whenever Mary wet her bed, she would throw out her bark cloth beddings only to be given others from her grandmother, thus drowning her dreams of having her bark cloth beddings replaced by cotton bed sheets. Mary grew up in the village and having cotton bed sheets and a blanket instead of the bark cloth beddings was a dream she always treasured and hoped would one day come true. She envisioned that cotton bed sheets were better than bark cloth because they were a new introduction on the textile scene especially in the city. She hoped that her grandmother would one day buy them for her. Unfortunately, Mary's grandmother did not fall for Mary's tricks of throwing out her beddings. Her grandmother labored to explain to Mary that bark cloth was better than all other textiles on the market and that it was culturally important and acceptable, but Mary held onto her dreams.

As a grown woman, Mary was able to buy the cotton bed sheets and blanket that she had coveted as a child, but her childhood experiences with bark cloth beddings had enabled her to appreciate bark cloth. In addition to the cotton bed sheets and blanket, she had a piece of bark cloth on her bed. Her appreciation of bark cloth enabled her to embrace it even when it was given to her as a symbol of her cultural role as her aunt's successor. She understood that it was more than just a cloth or bedding, it was an identity symbol of her past that she really wanted to take with her into the future. Margaret, on the

other hand, had experienced the cotton bed sheets before the bark cloth so, according to her, using bark cloth as bedding was no longer trendy. She did not even consider putting bark cloth on her bed. She even chuckled when Mary mentioned that she used it on her bed. Margaret, however, considered and appreciated bark cloth as part of Buganda's cultural heritage just like the role she was playing as a dead King's wife. However, I sensed her frustration and defiance towards her role when she made reference to the constant kneeling they had to do in the hut. She told me she would not even kneel in her own home but was obligated to kneel here because she was in a marriage with a dead person who neither noticed nor appreciated her but, because of the intangible aspect of culture for which she had respect, she had to do it.

4.3.4 Surrounded with bark cloth

The space that the two women spent two months a year in as the Kings' wives was partitioned, and had surfaces covered, with bark cloth (Appendix IV). Both women agreed that the bark cloth-clad space was truly representative of Buganda's glory. They both expressed their comfort, living in that space in their roles, because they felt a cultural connection between bark cloth and that space, which they felt was appropriate and depictive of Buganda's culture and heritage of which they were proud to be part. Being part of Buganda's cultural heritage for Mary and Margaret enabled them to feel that Kasubi tombs, its contents and what it represented belonged to them as *Baganda*. They continually made reference to the space as theirs; a sense of ownership that was derived from their pride in their cultural heritage that they agreed to embrace. They were proud that their forefathers had used the bark cloth for a variety of uses including bedding, architectural purposes, and other cultural traditions.

As the Kings' wives, Mary and Margaret were occasionally summoned to that King's palace for occasions to which they wore bark cloth as a way of respecting the King and their cultural role. Wearing bark cloth on such occasions symbolized their cultural status and identity as the Kings' wives and they felt more appropriately dressed. Apparently, any event that mandated their presence as the Kings' wives required them to be dressed in bark cloth as their symbol of identity. At first I thought that they just wore the bark cloth because of who they were but Mary said that bark cloth belonged to their forefathers and they grew up in the midst of it, so she and the other wives were obligated to embrace it and pass its value and meaning on to subsequent generations. Margaret agreed with her about the need to preserve the bark cloth and passing it on to the next generations. Wearing bark cloth as the Kings' wives was a way of helping the younger generation understand the cultural significance of the women's roles and that of bark cloth.

Although Margaret seemed aware of the value of bark cloth as a cultural object that she associated with her cultural position, she seemed unwilling to incorporate it in her life outside Kasubi. When I asked the women about their children's reaction to the use of bark cloth in their homes, Mary said there was no way the children would ever accept to be covered with it because they would think that she wanted them dead since they associated bark cloth with the dead. Margaret then interjected that her children also disliked bark cloth and would not even accept to be covered with it when sick. Covering the sick with bark cloth was a Kiganda custom because bark cloth was believed to have some kind of healing effect. Margaret, however, stunned me when she said that she did not blame the young people for rebuffing bark cloth. Although she had lived with her

grandparents and used bark cloth beddings, she had also spent sometime including her earlier years in the city, where bark cloth was mainly used for wrapping the dead. Her experience with bark cloth at her grandparents' place caused her to have nightmares because she thought that covering oneself with bark cloth was like willing them to die. As an elderly person, she still felt uneasy about covering herself with bark cloth although she understood its cultural importance. Apparently she could not blame the young people who shunned bark cloth, because she realized that she identified with them. Mary agreed with her that the young people probably associated bark cloth with the dead.

Mary, however, felt that the introduction of Christianity and education were responsible for the negative attitudes that many people had towards Buganda's material culture and cultural traditions in general. She said that Christians referred to traditional customs and related objects, including bark cloth, as satanic. If one decided to dress in bark cloth especially in the more traditional style, people, especially Christians and those with education, would stare at them and whisper behind their backs, referring to that person as a witch doctor performing a ritual of some sort. Margaret felt that, instead of one being mistaken for a witch doctor, she would rather abandon the bark cloth altogether. Both women felt that the younger generation was disconnected from the older generation. The younger ones had more formal education, probably one reason why they were not appreciative of their cultural heritage. The lack of appreciation could be attributed to the lack of cultural information being passed down through the generations and not included in the education system which contained a lot of foreign content. As a result, Mary and Margaret were faced with opposition from their children who asked questions like "so what?" when the ladies tried to explain issues regarding their cultural

heritage. As they described their experiences in Kasubi, Mary and Margaret recalled their observations of the young people who visited the tombs during field trips over the years. In the past, the children wrote down almost everything that the tour guides explained and asked many questions. However, by the time of my visit, the women were alarmed at how in more recent years the young people just sat there disinterested and barely listened to the guides, asking only a question or two. That gradual disinterest was evidence to them of the children's lack of comprehension of the cultural information and the need to revisit the education curriculum in order to incorporate cultural aspects. If those children heard the cultural information from both their parents and their teachers, their attitudes may be different. Mary and Margaret felt helpless that they were unable to reach the younger generations through their cultural positions but hoped the education system would.

Living in two places was not easy for both women. Shifting back and forth from one place to another meant a constant reconstruction and deconstruction of identity. They revealed that there were many tensions both at home and in Kasubi. In Kasubi they felt that there were too many cultural rules in their positions that they declined to explain but some of them came through as we talked. Being married, for instance, created problems for the women because there needed to be some kind of reconciliation between the families and the Kasubi family. If one of the women was married she was required to introduce her husband to the King and, before doing so, she was forbidden from sleeping with her husband. The husband was supposed to seek permission from the King by offering gifts, and request the King to allow him to be with his wife since she was considered to be in a marriage with the King. Otherwise she was forbidden from having

another husband besides the King. In a related incident, Mary had brought her daughter to the site to live with her during her time there, but she was warned against doing so by the other wives, probably because they feared that competition would arise amongst them for the Kings. Mary wondered how the young people were expected to learn about their culture or even appreciate it if they were guarded against it. Margaret did not seem to agree with Mary because she believed that one had to learn about such things when they were ready and not before, because sometimes they were not the right person to take up the responsibility. Furthermore, some positions like the ones held by the women required utmost secrecy about the details of their lives in Kasubi. That might explain why many youths were disinterested in cultural issues or asked why they needed to know about them since there seemed to be a lot of mystery surrounding cultural traditions.

My interaction with Mary and Margaret was significant to me at many levels especially regarding the place of bark cloth in Buganda. Firstly, I saw bark cloth as representative of Buganda's past heritage. Secondly, I saw bark cloth as a struggling part of Buganda's heritage in the future. Bark cloth was used in Kasubi mainly as a way of dividing up the space and by showcasing and preserving Buganda's heritage by covering the surfaces with it. In these uses, bark cloth created a cultural ambience that was intended to communicate the glory of Buganda Kingdom. For the custodians of the site, bark cloth in that space represented cultural heritage and, created a sense of security because they were on cultural duty and that bark cloth clad space exuded that feeling. In a more personal way bark cloth was for the women, a way of connecting them with their ancestors.

4.4 Alan's story

4.4.1 Meeting Alan

Alan was the cultural minister of Buganda at the time I conducted my research. I decided to interview him because of this position which I believed placed him in an informed situation. I knew that he would provide me with information regarding the place of bark cloth in Buganda and its potential. When I went to his office on a Friday at the Buganda parliamentary building, I was unlucky because I was informed by the receptionist that he was not in and was only in the office on Thursdays. I tried again the next week but finally got him the week after that on my third attempt. When I finally met Alan in his office, he welcomed me. I then explained that I was conducting research on bark cloth in Buganda and wanted him to be part of the study. He informed me that he was very pleased to be part of the study because he was very interested in people who wanted to learn more about Buganda's heritage especially those who were pursuing further studies. This was probably because a few individuals were willing to delve into traditional knowledge and cultural heritage which was not a very popular subject amongst those who chose to pursue higher education as they considered it as a backward trend. I then gave him the information sheet and consent form which he read through and signed. I could not however proceed with the interview since he had other commitments, so we scheduled a meeting for the following week and exchanged phone numbers.

On the agreed day, I arrived promptly at Alan's office but unfortunately he was not in. I then called him and he informed me that he had been held up somewhere else so we rescheduled for the following week. I arrived at his office at 10:00 am on the day of our meeting but had to wait for about an hour before Alan showed up. I tried to resist the

urge to call him since his assistant had informed me that he would be in since he had a meeting that afternoon. My patience paid off an hour later when he came in and ushered me into his office. He, however, made it very clear that he had a meeting that he needed to prepare for so I could not stay for longer than thirty minutes. Since I had gone through a hard time to get him, I opted to spend the thirty minutes with him and maybe plan to reschedule.

4.4.2 Alan's response to UNESCO's recognition of bark cloth making

I asked Alan if there were any deliberations or decisions he had been involved in or needed to make on bark cloth as a cultural minister. He told me that when talking about bark cloth, there was need to first acknowledge the fact that it had been placed on the world heritage list by UNESCO. Consequently he expressed the need to revitalize the planting of bark cloth trees. He said that the tree planting scheme was to focus mainly in those areas like Kooki and Buddu, which were known for extensive bark cloth production. Additionally the planting of survivor trees also known as *egilama* would be emphasized. The survivor trees were those that developed straight trunks, could withstand multiple stripping and yielded good quality bark cloth. The non-survivor trees on the other hand had crooked trunks which made them difficult to strip and the resultant bark cloth was not of good quality. Additionally, they did not heal properly from the stripping and eventually died off which made them unfavorable for the tree planting project. Alan also stated the need to designate space for the demonstration of the craft of bark cloth making including the tools used in the trade, that is the mallets, anvils and the structure or building in which bark cloth was carried out in the past. The demonstration

site was to be in the form of a typical village which would showcase, besides the bark cloth making craft, other traditional activities that were carried out in the past. This would act as a source of information for research programs and activities and would also act as a source of information on Buganda's heritage regarding past activities and customs. As a result, Buganda's cultural heritage would be disseminated to the masses through the wealth of information obtained from the traditional village.

As we talked, Alan contemplated the plans for the future of bark cloth in Buganda. He revealed that he had heard that Germans had developed an interest in bark cloth in Buganda. They had identified it as the best material for army uniforms since it could withstand army activities like crawling and dragging themselves on the ground. Because of its durability the Germans were also using it to make car seat covers which gave the bark cloth a lot of value when used for high-end exotic purposes. This transformation of bark cloth from more traditional to exotic function meant that bark cloth had a lot of potential of having its value improved thus, widening its market. This potential for the possible shift in functional transformation of bark cloth would therefore make it more appealing to the people of Buganda. For the outsiders it was a new cloth to work in and explore with in various dimensions. It was interesting to note that Alan considered the use of bark cloth by the Germans as car seat covers and army uniforms as exotic, when the Germans, probably, considered the use of bark cloth in Kiganda traditions like burial, as exotic.

Understanding the potential transformation of bark cloth was possible for Alan because he had a deep comprehension of the traditional functions of bark cloth which ranged from past to present uses. He expressed to me his amazement at the people of the

Ngonge clan who made the great discovery of bark cloth and who were offered the responsibility of being the official bark cloth makers of Buganda. He also hoped that the people of the *Ngonge* clan had studied the origins of the bark cloth and their history and had written down something that could be read by the successive generations. Alan also explained how women used it as clothing, and specifically noted that Henry Morton Stanley, British's first missionary to Uganda, found the King's wives dressed in bark cloth. This revelation showed how bark cloth could have had some gender connotations to it which meant that there must have been specific ways that bark cloth was worn by the women that made it very significant. Alan also explained how the use of bark cloth as shroud for the dead was to give the body a preservative effect which in the event that a body had to be exhumed and reburied, identification of the body would be easy. Exhuming a body occurred when a person was buried in a different place from their family burial site. The family members had to make sure that they got their dead family member back and reburied them in the family burial site. The bark cloth would drain out all the moisture and mummify the body leaving all recognizable features intact which would enable the family members to identify the body. In this case bark cloth facilitated the reunion of the living family members with their dead. This helped to ensure that the dead were laid to rest in their rightful places which was an intangible aspect of bark cloth.

Aside from burial, Alan mentioned how bark cloth was used in what he called more traditional occasions like *okuzina abalongo* in which twins were initiated. He also talked about how heirs were installed with bark cloth in a ceremony known as *okusumika*. He felt that using bark cloth during cultural rituals afforded them the cultural ambience and would ensure that those rituals would not easily be abandoned by the people since

they saw the use of their special cloth set the ritual aside from any other that would involve foreign textiles. He gave an example of when a King dies and his heir has to cover the fallen King's face with a small piece of back cloth in a ritual known as *okubikka akabugo* which literally meant covering with bark cloth. He expressed how sure he was that they used bark cloth on such occasions and that only the royal family members attended such rituals. Using bark cloth during such rituals emphasized the intangibility of bark cloth which is articulated and expressed in several of Buganda's cultural activities.

4.4.3 Alan's experiences with bark cloth

As Alan gave me all this information, I wondered how he knew all this. It appeared that he had learned a lot about bark cloth as he grew up, which enabled him to understand the events around bark cloth during the time he was cultural minister. When I asked him, he informed me that his involvement with bark cloth started as early as six years of age. He was taught by his father the entire process of making bark cloth and during our conversation he proceeded to describe it in detail. He described how the bark was stripped off the tree and the scraping off of the unwanted outer bark leaving the inner bark. The inner bark then went through the first beating process which was carried out using a special mallet in a process known as *okusaaka.* This process entailed beating of the bark at an angle and as the bark thinned out another mallet was used in a process known as *okutenga* during which they beat the bark while stretching it. Finally as the bark widened, they laid it out in the sun to dry before the final beating process known as *okuttula.* Going through that experience as a child for Alan was a privilege. He felt he had not lost anything because he believed that he was privileged to know something that

someone else did not know. To emphasize the importance of that experience he quoted an anonymous source, 'If I can play tennis and swing but you can only play tennis and not swing, I'm one up on you. You cannot be the better for lacking it'. This experience was intangible and could not be fathomed by someone else who had not experienced it, at the same time it had so much to do with the tangible bark cloth.

Having the informal education in addition to formal education provided Alan with wider knowledge and skills to enable him succeed both in the informal and formal sectors of life. Engaging in the traditional craft of bark cloth making inspired Alan to write a book on education for the common man in 1970 entitled *Critical Issues in African Education.* In that book he used bark cloth and the craft of bark cloth making as an example for comparing people who were unemployed school dropouts with no skills to those who had received education for the common man and were already involved in skilled activities like bark cloth making. In his book, Alan said he mentioned the importance of questioning the entire process of bark cloth making right from when it was stripped from the tree. He underscored the need to establish the scientific processes involved, how long each stage needed be carried out, for instance how long the folding before the beating needed to be done, how much beating and at what amount of pressure in each section of the cloth was required. Since the traditional method for treating the infected bark was to smear cow dung on the infected parts, he also cited the need to find out how that process worked, how much cow dung was required and for how long it could be left on. It was common knowledge that most trees dried from having their bark removed. However Alan was taught that the bark cloth trees had to be wrapped with banana leaves which protected the raw bark from the sun's heat and permitted the trunk

to heal and develop a new bark. This healing process intrigued him and consequently he felt that there had to be a scientific explanation as to how that healing process occurred.

Basically, Alan wanted scientific explanations to the processes involving the production of bark cloth. For him, these were the kind of questions that would arise from teaching traditional knowledge and skills to the younger people like the production of bark cloth. He felt that as long as the young people were involved they would eventually appreciate the importance of learning those skills and their thinking would be stimulated and expanded. That would afford them the opportunities to question the processes and devise means of developing them. Consequently Alan became more aware of the lack of traditional knowledge in the education system as a young man and felt the urgent need to address it as a critical issue in an education system that had been overrun by foreign influence and was therefore not beneficial to the people of Buganda at that time. As he explained the irrelevance of Uganda's education system, Alan recalled his education experience as an international student which he had received from what he called "both sides of the Atlantic". He explained that the Americans first identified their objectives, then defined them, whereas the British focused on academic rigor regardless of how relevant the subject matter was. Unfortunately, Uganda had been colonized by the British so it had inherited the British system, hence the irrelevance in Uganda's education system. He, therefore, felt that the irrelevance in Uganda's education system lay in the lack of originality and this setback could only be addressed by incorporating and emphasizing indigenous development. This meant that Uganda needed a system that focused on the people's existing situation at that time before extending to the external communities.

Alan, however, realized that what he had written in his book then did not make a lot of sense to others probably because by then the cultural institutions were dysfunctional and there was a lot of political instability within the country. He was, however, grateful that bark cloth had been included on UNESCO's world heritage list and that UNESCO had also provided some money for the development of bark cloth by first of all planting trees. He was disappointed that it had taken thirty five years for what he had written to receive recognition but was happy that finally bark cloth was recognized internationally. He hoped that the recognition would be the first step for the Baganda to appreciate their cultural heritage and therefore would devise means of including it in their education system. The seeming lack of traditional knowledge in the education system at that time was attributed to the coming of the Arabs and Europeans to Buganda from the mid nineteenth century. Besides the foreign textiles that these foreigners brought with the, were the Islam and Christian religions that were also introduced. By so doing, they discouraged the natives from practicing their traditional religions which involved the summoning of the spirits through dance and song. At that time, bark cloth was the main cloth being worn and used to separate space in the traditional shrines. For the foreigners, the traditional religion was considered pagan and primitive and therefore every thing used during the rituals was, too, including bark cloth. That disregard for the traditional religion by the colonialists and ensuing conversion of the natives starting with the monarchs to the new religions especially Christianity was the beginning of the downfall of the traditional religion. Besides religion, the colonialists also introduced an education system which stressed reading, writing and arithmetic but had

nothing to do with the traditional skills of the Baganda since these were regarded as archaic and therefore needed to be done away with.

As cultural minister, Alan felt responsible for demystifying the misconceptions that were created by the foreigners about Buganda's heritage. He was frustrated that many people were shying away from Buganda's cultural customs because they thought that these made them inferior to other people. The people looked up to the foreign culture as the conventional way of life. For instance, he said that he was having trouble with a particular Bishop who was speaking against cultural traditions and believed that whoever had something to do with things like bark cloth was involved in demonic activities. Alan was against him and believed that that particular Bishop was very backward and ignorant because having seen bark cloth used for such purposes did not mean that everyone who used it did so with the same intention. Alan also felt that the youth needed to be sensitized about revisiting their cultural traditions since most of them had been derailed by Christianity and only focused on praising God and going to heaven. He had noticed that most of them looked down upon getting involved in cultural knowledge as low in status and were not even industrious in the work. Again, he blamed such attitudes on the education system which he said produced people who were schooled but not educated. He blamed it for being irrelevant to the needs of the people and felt frustrated by the consumerism behavior that had been nurtured by such an education system which created non productive people. He said that over the years he had observed that people were attracted to foreign products, a mentality which resulted from colonial influence which prompted people to abandon what they had and take up foreign culture. He, however,

believed one way to change such attitudes was to introduce traditional knowledge and skills into the education system as the young people would be able to own it.

To understand the tangible and intangible significance of bark cloth for the Baganda, Alan recalled how he had seen bark cloth being used for several purposes just as any other cloth and even more. As he explained, he realized that the uses went ahead to include more functional uses of bark cloth which he said depended on the quality of the cloth. He cited the *kitentegere* which was the first bark taken off the tree and was used mainly to dry food stuffs and for any other rough activity and for sleeping purposes. The *kimote* was of very good quality and was made from the subsequent stripping but it was also improved by steaming the beaten cloth which softened it and gave it a richer color to make it look and feel like any other cloth. The kimote was used specifically for clothing because of its favorable characteristics. Recalling these past uses of bark cloth made Alan more conscious of the increase in variety of uses to which bark cloth was being put. He noted the contemporary uses of bark cloth like artists being able to use it as a medium which gave bark cloth economic value since he had noticed that most people who buy bark cloth art pieces were tourists and liked to buy artifacts made from materials that were not common where they came from. He also mentioned that it was being used to make what he called special garments and cited an example of a former president of Uganda who wore a bark cloth waist coat whenever he visited Bulange (Buganda's parliament). Alan construed that to be an excellent educative gesture which emphasized the intangibility of bark cloth although it countered what the missionaries had advocated. Such gestures could be explained as ways in which individuals expressed their identity and commitment to keeping Buganda's heritage alive.

For Alan practicing cultural traditions enabled him to appreciate his heritage including bark cloth which he learned to make when he was young and became aware of the different uses to which it was put. These experiences enabled him to appreciate bark cloth. As he grew up and obtained more education, he was able to question the process of bark cloth making skills and activities in relation to other traditional skills. Experiencing both the formal classroom education both locally and internationally, and the informal education of bark cloth making, he became aware of a gap in the education system which he realized did not accommodate the traditional knowledge and skills like bark cloth making and its uses. He felt that incorporating traditional knowledge and skills into the formal education system would go a long way in enabling the younger generation to appreciate and learn more about their culture. This would ultimately be beneficial in demystifying the missionary-inspired foreign misconception of cultural traditions as primitive and pagan which many of the young people had embraced. Although he appreciated the contemporary shifts in bark cloth use, Alan felt that the progress was slow and could be sped up by introducing traditional skills and knowledge like bark cloth making in the mainstream education system. Alan's experiences and commitment to revitalizing positive attitudes towards cultural heritage, particularly bark cloth goes a long way to underscore the tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth.

4.5 Andrew's story

4.5.1 Meeting Andrew

I read about Andrew in one of the documentaries that had publicized UNESCO's declaration of bark cloth as one of the world's greatest treasures in 2005. In the article,

Andrew was mentioned as the royal bark cloth maker of Buganda. This made him an important participant for my study since I was partly interested in talking to someone who had been involved in the craft of bark cloth making for at least fifteen years. Since bark cloth making was a familial and cultural role for Andrew I felt that he was in the best position to explain to me how he saw the place of bark cloth in Buganda at that time. Coincidentally, when my friend in Toronto sent me the bark cloth document, Andrew's contact information was in it. As already explained in Raymond's story, the contact information happened to be Raymond's. Raymond indicated that he knew Andrew and would be very willing to take me to him. Andrew and Raymond had met earlier during some research activity that Raymond had been assisting in, which was an advantage to me since I would be meeting Andrew with someone he already knew.

On the day that we agreed to go to Andrew's place, Raymond and I met at the museum and set off for Andrew's place which was a little over an hour's drive away, and in a village known as Nsangwa in Mawokota County. During the journey, Raymond and I talked more about some of his experiences during his traditional conservation training and practices. Eventually, we arrived at Andrew's place and I parked under a huge mango tree so that the car would receive ample shade from the scorching sunshine. We got out of the car and stepped into a large compound which had a medium sized house made of local materials and a small open hut made of poles and grass thatching. Raymond informed me that the hut was locally known as *omukomago* or *ekkomagiro* which was the workshop where Andrew and his family made the bark cloth. I was amazed that the chief bark cloth maker of Buganda had such a building in which to perform his traditional royal duties. I also noticed there was no bark cloth activity going on in the workshop at

that time. Aside from a few young children playing in the yard, there was no one else around although the front door was open. As we approached the front door, an elderly man dressed in a long sleeved shirt and trousers came out to meet us and exclaimed when he recognized Raymond. They greeted one another and Raymond introduced us and we too exchanged greetings. I realized that I had just met with the royal bark cloth maker of Buganda. He invited us into his house which was decorated simply with a set of chairs and, as I sat down on one of them, I saw a folded piece of bark cloth in a corner of the room close to where I was seated. Raymond then briefed him on the reason for our visit and asked me to explain the details. I explained my research, its purpose and the need to have him as a participant, to which he consented. He said he was unwell and was not doing anything except getting a hair cut from his wife but would continue with the hair cut after our conversation.

4.5.2 Andrew's cultural role

As I turned on the recorder, Raymond asked Andrew to say his names which he gave and informed us that he was born in 1924 and grew up in that same village Nsangwa, where he had lived until the time of our visit. I then asked Andrew how he became involved with bark cloth making, and he said that his involvement with bark cloth began [illegible] from childhood, when his father taught him and his siblings how to make bark cloth. They learnt how to strip the trees, how to prepare the workshop where the beating of the bark took place (*omukomago).* They also learned about the different types of mallets and when each was used. He informed us that his father used to buy the mallets but, in most cases, people who appreciated his cultural role as the royal bark cloth maker of Buganda gave him mallets, a gesture which Andrew felt was typical of the

kindness of the Baganda. He felt that as a family they were expected to master the craft of bark cloth making, locally known as *okukomaga,* because it was a family and cultural role which they inherited from their forefathers. Unfortunately his father died when Andrew was about fifteen years old; a day and date which he said he remembered vividly and referred to it as recent. Andrew was declared as his father's heir, which meant taking up the responsibility that his father and family had been entrusted with by the King. He was determined to uphold that cultural role and so encouraged his older brothers, with whom he was still working even at the time of our meeting, to keep alive the craft their father had taught them because it was their identity as people of the *Ngonge* clan.

Andrew also told us the story of how the people of the *Ngonge* clan had discovered bark cloth about 600 years earlier by beating various tree barks in order to find something that could be used for dressing instead of the animal skin that was being worn at that time. As they experimented, one of them known as Kaboggoza realized that a particular tree bark was widening as he beat upon it continuously so he took it home and used it as bedding for him and his wife. He was so excited and took a sample of the beaten bark to the King so he could acknowledge that discovery, a common practice at that time. King Kimera, King of Buganda at that time, was very happy and used the bark cloth to cover himself, and thereafter, ensured that all the people of Buganda recognized it as their official cloth. Since each clan in Buganda at that time had a special cultural role, the King therefore declared the people of the Ngonge clan as the chief bark cloth makers of Buganda specifically those from Kaboggoza's lineage *(omutuba)* that Andrew was heading at the time of our meeting. The King also gave them a large piece of land amounting to about 640 acres to plant the fig trees and produce bark cloth. This piece of

land known today as Nsangwa village was thereafter acknowledged as the village for the people of the Ngonge clan. Many years later, Andrew became the chief bark cloth maker of Buganda after inheriting the role from his father who, like Andrew, descended from the lineage of the Ngonge clan that discovered the bark cloth. The head of that *omututba* was bestowed with the title of Kaboggoza which Andrew inherited from his father and thus became approximately the thirty eighth Kaboggoza.

As we talked about his responsibilities and experiences with bark cloth, Andrew expressed his pride at having made the bark cloth used during the coronation of the King of Buganda at that time, His Royal Highness Ronald Muwenda Mutebi. He described how he had handed over the bark cloth that he made for the occasion to *Mugema* (the head of the Monkey clan) who was also the King's grandfather who then performed the coronation by placing it around the king's shoulders amidst chanteing *(okulaamiriza)* after which Andrew's role ended. Making the bark cloth for that occasion enabled Andrew to realize that his role in Buganda was still respected and therefore intensified his aspiration to uphold his role in the institution of Buganda Kingdom. Using bark cloth during such ceremonies like the King's coronation was, for Andrew, a way of accentuating the importance and significance of bark cloth in Buganda as its key symbol of identity. He felt that having or using bark cloth was symbolic of Kiganda culture and, a true Muganda expected to see or use bark cloth at each and every cultural ceremony as a symbol of Buganda's heritage and it was a way of celebrating that heritage. For him, seeing a person dressed in, or using, bark cloth would signify that that person was a true Muganda.

4.5.3 Bark cloth vs foreign textiles

Andrew intimated that although he did not wear bark cloth, he had a piece of bark cloth on his bed a gesture he felt was partly his way of expressing his cognition of the value of bark cloth. Andrew explained that besides being warm, having bark cloth on the bed came in handy if one fell sick and died. The bark cloth on the bed would be the immediate shroud that would be used by whoever would be attending to the sick person. Having bark cloth on the bed was a way of preparing oneself for any eventualities and ensuring that one was culturally presentable even in the event of their death. He stressed that in Buganda bark cloth was supposed to be placed closest to the body before other fabrics like cotton bed sheets which that person may have had on their bed. This was the only way that the dead would be identified as a Muganda and since they were believed to be joining their ancestors who had died before them, wrapping in bark cloth probably ensured that the dead person was prepared appropriately to meet, be welcomed and easily identified by the ancestors.

In instances where bodies were wrapped in foreign textiles or even bark cloth and placed in coffins, Andrew felt that the wood of the coffin was just a modification and represented the bark cloth. This is probably because bark cloth is obtained from tree bark. So, for Andrew the wooden coffin symbolically represented bark cloth. Andrew also explained that coffins were a recent and foreign introduction, but in the past and in cases of lack of money, bodies were wrapped tightly in several pieces of bark cloth and placed in the ground. According to him, bark cloth had an advantage over foreign textiles in that, it kept the body intact and if there was need to exhume it the wooden coffin would have decomposed but the bark cloth and body would remain intact. As he explained the use of

bark cloth in burial, he recalled and told of an incident when they had to bury someone in his own home under certain circumstances that he declined to disclose. He said that at the time the body was exhumed it was impossible to tell that a wooden coffin had even been involved because it was already decomposed. However, the bark cloth, and body were undamaged. He supposed that the bark cloth drained out any moisture from the body and then adheres to it. Bark cloth's preservative characteristics ensured that the bodily features remained intact. The body, even after many years, could be identified as having belonged to a man or a woman and the actual physical features of the person would be distinct. He also revealed that he would not be comfortable if he died and was not wrapped in bark cloth. As he said this he shuddered and declared repeatedly that he would be very uncomfortable if he died and bark cloth was not next to his skin. He said that was the only way he would remain intact and not disintegrate. It would also ease the burial process if the body was not flailing around. So for Andrew, if anyone wanted to include foreign fabrics during the wrapping, he felt they had to do so after adequate bark cloth had been used. Foreign fabrics could then be added for aesthetic purposes. For him, wrapping his body in bark cloth after his demise, held a more intangible significance as representative of his identity as a Muganda, a head of a *mutuba* and a chief bark cloth maker. These identities would be stripped from him if foreign textiles were used, although he considered them to be more aesthetic than bark cloth. To avoid any mistakes and cultural embarrassment, he kept a piece of bark cloth on his bed for use in the event of his death.

4.5.4 Challenges of being involved with bark cloth

Despite his family's involvement with bark cloth, Andrew did not recall using bark cloth as clothing during his childhood because by then the foreign textiles and clothing were available on the market. However, he recalled his family using bark cloth as bedding at that time. As he grew older, he got fed up with the bark cloth, because, most people in his community at that time shunned the bark cloth, and turned to the foreign textiles. They considered foreign textiles to be trendy and the use of bark cloth as bedding was regarded as a dirty venture since bark cloth could not be washed when it got soiled. This was also probably because the natural brown color of bark cloth was not as attractive as the variety of colorful modern fabrics which Raymond called "*ngoye*" meaning cloth or textiles which he said were trendier at that time. That mentality of referring to foreign fabrics as trendy seemed to have intensified over the years as foreign textiles flooded the market and people abandoned bark cloth. Even the women who commonly wore bark cloth got fed up with it and turned to foreign textiles leaving bark cloth for use in burying the dead, and during traditional ceremonies. Raymond described how even at the time of our meeting, people in his village did not consider wearing bark cloth during ceremonies such as weddings appropriate. If a person wore bark cloth during such a ceremony, others would stare at him or her in amazement and scorn them for wearing bark cloth. This was because they believed bark cloth to be old fashioned, backward and pagan, a message which was communicated by the colonialists and reinforced by the influx of foreign textiles on the market. Consequently, he felt that bark cloth was not as powerful as it had been in the past. Most people he had grown up with in the same village had emigrated to other areas and others had immigrated into his village.

He observed that there had been shifts in the comprehension of the history of that village in relation to bark cloth and therefore many did not appreciate the value of, or understand the significance of bark cloth at that time.

The negative attitudes towards bark cloth that were exhibited by the people in Andrew's community were evidence of a loss of interest in, and understanding of, bark cloth. He explained that the loss was commensurate with a significant drop in the price of bark cloth which he described as low, useless and deplorable, and yet bark cloth production entailed a lot of hard work and energy. This disparate input and output had subsequently affected his family as his children did not see the value of engaging in a craft that was not lucrative. He revealed that although he had tried to interest his children in the craft of bark cloth making, only two had learned, but these too were not fully engaged in the craft since they and the others were still in school. He said that they all preferred to get higher paying jobs in the city where they were studying, rather than engage in a slow and unproductive business like bark cloth making. To illustrate how slow the business was, he described how after making many pieces of bark cloth, they would have to wait for a long time before getting any buyers and exhausting the stock.

From talking to Andrew, I felt that probably the destabilization of the Buganda cultural and social fabric during the colonial period, and the ensuing political upheavals affected the dissemination of information regarding Andrew's role and craft. I felt that more people would have approached him for bark cloth since he was a culturally recognized figure, but that did not seem to be the case. He also acknowledged that not many people from the city bought bark cloth from him. His customers were largely from his community who bought bark cloth mainly for burial purposes. However, he always

kept some bark cloth around the house to give away in case someone died in the community. A few others from several areas also bought bark cloth from him for traditional medicine ceremonies, witchcraft and other traditional ceremonies like celebration of twins and succession. He felt that such ceremonies required the use of bark cloth because the ceremonies involved summoning the ancestral spirits which recognized bark cloth as the cloth they wore during their physical life. Thus they were able to identify and respond to the cleansing requests of those wearing or using the bark cloth and carry out any cleansing.

Andrew expressed his apprehension that the people who understood the cultural significance of bark cloth and were directly involved in the craft were getting older and fewer. This meant that the craft of bark cloth making and the significance of bark cloth in Buganda were gradually diminishing and needed to be reclaimed. Additionally he noted that the making of mallets used to beat the bark was a special skill that was mainly possessed by a few older individuals. The one in particular that he had known from childhood, and who made his mallets had died shortly before our meeting and he felt that the younger people who were involved in this craft were not doing a good job. This was probably because they focused more on benefiting economically and were not producing mallets with the same commitment and precision as their older counterparts. As Andrew shared his uncertainties, he went to an adjoining room and returned with two mallets and a piece of bark cloth to emphasize his point. The mallets were wrapped in pieces of bark cloth which struck me as peculiar. He explained that traditionally mallets were never left out in the open. He did not know how and why that custom was practiced and had never

questioned it but he just observed it the way he had been taught since it followed what his fore fathers had wanted so he strove to do as they did.

4.5.5 The demonstration

He then showed us the structure of the mallet which was cut out of one piece of wood with a smaller end as the handle and the larger end with grooves as the beater (Appendix V). He explained that the mallet was made from very hard wood known locally as *nzo,* and required a lot of patience and precision to make, which the young people lacked. Carving mallets out of that hard wood was a very difficult job and if one decided to use softer wood, the grooves would wear out very quickly during the bark cloth making process. He then showed us his mallets as an example of how even the grooves on the hard wood mallets wore out after some time but could be re-sharpened and reused several times until they wore down to the size of the handle after which the mallets were disposed of. As Andrew took us to see his workshop *(omukomago)* Raymond expressed his approval at Andrew having kept those mallets that identified him as Kaboggoza. Andrew replied that the type of mallets he had, were unavailable on the market since the people who made them were long dead. He then proceeded to describe each mallet. He said the first one was the *nsaasi* or *esaaka* which was used to soften the bark. After the bark softened, they used the *nzituzo* which had finer teeth than the *nsaasi* (Appendix V). I then told Andrew that I was interested in buying some mallets. He replied that he would try to secure some from his older brother since he could not give his own away because they symbolized his cultural role. As he prepared to demonstrate to us how the bark cloth was beaten in the *mukomago* where he led us, I asked him if women were in any way involved in bark cloth making. Andrew was taken aback by my

question, and, informed us in a strong voice that, in Buganda, bark cloth making was a man's job and that women did not make bark cloth or even step over the anvil because it was a taboo. Apparently he never questioned what could happen but he too grew up with that knowledge and noticed that it was being followed as the women never went to the *mukomago* to get involved with bark cloth making. Andrew however did not seem bothered by my wanting to know about how bark cloth was made as long as I did not get directly involved in the making process. This probably meant that the women were not prevented from knowing how bark cloth was made, so long as they kept away from the *mukomago.* It also appeared that the women too, knew that they were not supposed to get involved in the craft. Raymond, at this time, declared that that was a sign that men in Buganda loved their women because in other cultures the women were the ones who made the bark cloth!

The *mukomago* was a straw thatched rectangular hut without walls and supported with tree branches as poles (Appendix V). On the ground was some straw, probably used for sitting on as the men worked, and a thick four sided piece of wood, the length of which was almost the same as that of the *mukomago*. This was the anvil. Andrew explained that the anvil was from a tree known as *omusasa* which was also hard wood and gave off a musical sound during the beating of the bark cloth. He explained that three or four me,n each equipped with a mallet sat along the length of the anvil and placed a small piece of the bark on the anvil and started beating it while gently moving it away from them. The beating he explained started with one person beating, then another and another until all of them were beating in some kind of rhythm. The rhythm and the sound of the mallets against the anvil produced musical sounds which the beaters accompanied

with folk songs. This was probably why the *mukomago* was open so the music would go out and inform the community that there was bark cloth activity going on. As he explained how the bark was beaten, he demonstrated by placing the piece of bark cloth he had brought with the mallets on the anvil, and proceeded to beat it while singing, at first shyly, then firmly "*Mm mm mm Kaboggoza e Nsangwa, omukazi kyatalya kye kiwunya olwendo lwe mmm"* (Meaning the mallet you hear is for Kaboggoza in Nsangwa, what a woman doesn't eat, smells in her gourd). This song probably meant that although women were not involved in the crafting of bark cloth, they still had to use it. He also explained how sometimes the bark cloth got damaged either during the beating or as sun damage on the new tree bark and had to be repaired by either stitching or patching by the makers after beating the bark. He explained how, after beating, some pieces of bark cloth were subjected to remnant heat in a pit that had been used to prepare local brew. That process made the bark cloth softer and gave it a richer reddish brown color and the bark cloth was known as *kimote.*

Before we came out for the demonstration, however, Raymond had asked Andrew to describe the process of bark cloth making. We were informed that the first piece of bark cloth was known as *kitentegere* (Appendix VI) and was of poorer quality than *omusala* which was the second piece to be stripped and was nice and soft since it was better in quality (Appendix VI). Andrew then mentioned that there were about ten different species of trees from which bark cloth was obtained. All were in the *ficus natalensis* or fig tree family, locally known as the *mutuba* tree. He cited the *Entaweebwa, Nnabugi, Butana* amongst others, as some of the tree sources of bark cloth. He also mentioned other trees outside the ficus family from which bark cloth was obtained and

these included *Kirundu* which yielded white bark cloth and the *mukookoowe,* which yielded coarse bark cloth. He also described how the planting took place. It entailed trimming branches from the older trees and placing a bunch of them in a hole in the ground. After about two weeks, the branches would have developed roots which meant that they were ready to be planted. After the demonstration in the *mukomago*, Andrew took us around his plantation and showed us some of the seedlings that were ready for planting. The seedlings would then be planted in individual holes and, after about five years, they would be about half a foot in diameter and ready for the first stripping. He clarified, however, that the length of time it took for the tree to mature depended on the size of the initial branch planted as bigger branches would be ready for stripping after four years.

As Andrew led us deeper into his apparently large plantation I noticed that he had done a lot of intercropping and had many crops besides the fig tree. He had mangoes, oranges, avocados, coffee, jack fruit, pawpaw, guavas, bananas amongst others. He also had a pig sty with some pigs in it, and a boat which was used to make local brew. There was also evidence of cattle rearing from the hooves and cow dung that had accumulated in a particular section of the garden. These income-generating activities were signs that Andrew was not exclusively immersed in bark cloth making which, as he had mentioned earlier, was not lucrative. It seemed he had turned to other activities that would provide him with income to support his family and he even eagerly offered to sell me anything I wanted to buy from him, even piglets! I explained to him that I had nowhere to put them and he commented that "we" in the city needed to go into the rural areas and be of assistance to them, as they were getting older, and needed help with all the farming. This

informed me how desperate he was for help and perhaps that he had failed to receive any help from his own children who had gone into the city and were unwilling to return to the rural areas and engage in such activities as farming and bark cloth making. Raymond then mentioned that he knew one of Andrew's nephews who always shrugged his shoulders whenever Raymond mentioned going to the village or helping with the work carried out there. Apparently that young man did not want anything to do with his bark cloth ancestry, and it was possible that he was embarrassed by that part of his life which he probably regarded as part of his past. That created the question of how that generation was expected to preserve some of the traditional customs like bark cloth making.

Armed with a machete that he had picked from the house as we toured the garden, Andrew proceeded to demonstrate the stripping process that he had earlier described in the house. He had explained that after identifying the tree to be stripped, the outer surface was scraped off and he proceeded to demonstrate how that was done on a small section of one of the trees. Earlier on, when we were still in the house, he said that we were unfortunate because there was no one to assist him the with actual stripping of the trees, so we would not see the process physically. I had offered my assistance but he had made it clear that I was not supposed to be involved which was probably because I was female and it was taboo in Buganda for a female to be involved in *kukomaga.* In his demonstration he showed and explained to us how the incisions were made both vertically from where the branches started to the bottom of the trunk then horizontally at the top and bottom of the vertical incision. He then picked up a banana stem and cut it into a vertical piece about three feet long and sharpened it at one end. He demonstrated how the bark was peeled away from the trunk explaining that as one side was being

peeled away, someone else stood on the opposite side of the tree from the person stripping and pulled gently while the other continued easing the bark from the trunk. Andrew also showed us how the naked tree trunk was wrapped with banana leaves in a spiral form to protect it from the sun which could dry it out and kill it or in some cases, affect the new bark (Appendix V). The leaves had to be left on the trunk for about two weeks after which they were dry and were then removed. Then a shade made of branches and more banana leaves still had to be built around the healing tree until it was completely healed. It had to be checked constantly to ensure that it was healing well.

As Andrew explained the effects of the sun on the healing bark, he showed us a tree that had been stripped earlier with the new bark having some parts that had been damaged by the sun. He informed us that such affected parts needed to be covered with cow dung which enabled them to close up. Because of his failing health he had been unable to attend to all the trees that needed that kind of treatment. His failing health also meant that other trees that he showed us were meant to be stripped but were not and thus had become "sterile" which meant they had gone past the stage of their first stripping. He explained that he had planted many trees to which Raymond testified saying that there seemed to be more trees since his last visit. Andrew also informed us that he had planted more trees in another piece of land that he had in addition to the plantation we were in at that time. However most trees had become sterile and others had been attacked by disease. He attributed those problems to his failing health and his children's lack of interest in the activity. On mentioning his children's negative attitudes he paused thoughtfully and did not appear to wish to continue with the subject. I also had that sense when he had mentioned it earlier.

4.5.6 A future cultural attraction?

Raymond, being a traditional conservator, was impressed by what Andrew was doing, especially planting the trees. He informed Andrew that he was really pleased that Andrew was doing whatever was in his means to promote the craft of bark cloth making. Raymond kept repeating to himself that he was encouraged by Andrew's activities. Earlier on, when we were touring Andrew's projects, Raymond had been alarmed by the seeming shift in focus to other activities and had mentioned that there seemed to be a problem and that Andrew needed to be prepared because it was possible that his home could eventually become a tourist site. This concern, I believe, was in relation to UNESCO's declaration which, for Raymond, meant that it was probable that Andrew's home would become a tourist site and it would not reflect what the declaration intended. However, after touring and listening to Andrew's description of what was involved in bark cloth making, Raymond was confident that Andrew could easily handle any visitors. As we were being led to the *mukomago* by Andrew, Raymond expressed his thanks to the white lady who had introduced him to Kaboggoza during one of his research assistant expeditions. At that time he had never heard of Kaboggoza but was amazed that an outsider knew about Kaboggoza. He had then asked Andrew what he thought of our interest in bark cloth. Andrew expressed his happiness because he saw us as his children who were ready to take after him and said that he was always happy to see people who came wanting to learn about his trade. This was probably because his own children did not seem to have the same interest as the outsiders and this was the hope he had of the possible continuity of what he was doing and representing.

As we left the garden and walked towards the house I expressed my gratitude for what Andrew was doing and the potential that I had seen in his activities. I was, however, concerned that Andrew was getting older and frail and his wife who had followed us closely but quietly, was limping from the effects of what Andrew later said were child birth. Apparently her pelvis had been affected by the many child births that she had had and could do little to help him with the planting and, of course, being a woman she had her cultural limitations in the trade. As we passed by several fig trees Andrew kept attending to them by scraping off parasitic plants and roots from them, noting those that needed cow dung treatment and those that were getting overgrown or sterile and promising to attend to them when he got better. He showed us the nursery beds which were bundles of branches that he was preparing as seedlings for future planting. He noted that these were due for planting but he did not have the strength to plant them. As we went past a particular fig tree, Raymond asked Andrew to tell me about *ensika* which Andrew explained as the hanging roots characteristic of fig trees that sometimes grew large enough to be stripped and the bark made into bark cloth. He showed me one such tree root that had grown partly above the ground and had its outer bark similar to that of the tree. I was amazed at how somene had come up with such a discovery. Andrew informed me that the bark cloth from *ensika* was used to decorate the King's palace which was probably because that kind of bark cloth was rare, and therefore, deserving of the highest monarch. When Raymond had visited Andrew on one of his trips he had witnessed bark cloth being made from *ensika* and this time he felt that that he had not wanted me to read about it and say I did not know about it.

To emphasize his seriousness on Andrew's need to always be prepared for any visitors, Raymond informed him of the need to always be ready to even receive the King of Buganda who sat on the intangible culture committee with Raymond. This committee had been set up following the 2003 UNESCO declaration of Oral and Intangible culture, to oversee intangible cultural heritage in Buganda. Raymond expressed the possibility of Andrew's home becoming a tourist site but following the declaration it was very probable that the King would make an unexpected visit to the site. Andrew promised to clean up his garden and be ready and alert for the King. As we walked towards the car, I mentioned the need for him to encourage his children to get more involved because if the home became a recognized cultural site then they would be the beneficiaries. They would have to explain the history and processes of bark cloth to the visitors. As Andrew contemplated this, he noted that children would be reaping what their fathers had sweated for but insisted that he and his siblings used every opportunity to talk to the children and explain everything. Raymond added that if the site was fenced then the children would be collecting the fees.

This exchange encouraged Andrew who felt boosted and more vigilant with the work in the garden and more determined to educate and involve the children. Raymond also promised that Andrew would be provided with expert advice to help him prepare for being a cultural attraction to the international world. Interestingly, when asked about UNESCO's declaration as we reached the car he expressed his ignorance about it. According to him some white people came and then others and they all promised to return. This had happened before, as people had always visited him and promised to return but he was resigned to the fact that they would never return. I think his earlier

experiences were with researchers who had never returned and the reporters who had covered the UNESCO story had probably not explained themselves well. But since Raymond had visited him several times, Andrew commented that he was sure of Raymond's return and not mine! Raymond took note of Andrew's expression of his ignorance to the declaration and tried to explain it but as we said our goodbyes Andrew's facial expression showed that he was just going through another research data collection experience.

4.6 Irene's story

4.6.1 Meeting Irene

In this study I also decided to include a seller of bark cloth as a research participant because, I believed that selling bark cloth was a venture that not any one would easily engage in. Bark cloth, a traditional textile was not at the fore-front of textiles in Uganda. A lot of people who went into the textiles business opted for foreign textiles so I was convinced that whoever chose to involve themselves in selling a traditional textile, had to be really appreciative of their culture and proud of their material culture and cultural traditions. I was, however, unaware of the bark cloth seller who would become a participant and had not discussed this with Raymond. However, Raymond had earlier introduced me to Charles, the artist, who painted exclusively on bark cloth. It was through Charles' son, that I was given the contact of a woman from whom the son purchased bark cloth that his father painted on. I was informed that the woman was located in a place known as *ewamusigula* or Musigula's place.

A few days later, I drove to Musigula's place which was actually a small cluster of shops that sold mainly traditional objects like bark cloth, gourds, cowry shells and coffins amongst other things. The shops were on both sides of a major road just outside of Kampala city. When I arrived at Musigula's, I parked on one side of the road and suddenly I was being called by several shop attendants to buy their products. I became confused as I realized that they probably thought that I was a customer that they had to haggle over! I walked cautiously toward the shops that sold bark cloth and coffins and asked a lady in one of the shops for directions to Irene's shop. The lady informed me that Irene was not around but she could provide me with the same goods that Irene had. I realized that she actually believed that I was a customer and needed to get me before Irene did. I informed her that I was not intending to buy anything and that I needed Irene for a completely different purpose. She reluctantly directed me to Irene's shop which was on the opposite side of the road. I entered my car, drove over and parked in front of what I was informed was Irene's shop. The door was locked with a padlock, but there was a middle aged man seated on a stool next door doing his laundry. He welcomed me and we exchanged greetings and he asked me if I was looking for Irene. I agreed and he informed me that he was her brother but she had gone to town and was expected back shortly. He then offered her telephone number saying that I could call her and find out when she would be home or make an appointment with her. I called the number, explained my need to see her. I mentioned that I wanted to have her as a participant for my study. She informed me that she would not be able to see me that day but could meet with me the next day.

The next day around 10:00 am, I parked in front of Irene's shop. This time around, the door was wide open, with a piece of bark cloth draped in the door way as a curtain or blind. Hanging from a wire just outside her door was another piece of bark cloth. It was probably a way of advertising her trade. As I approached the shop, a middle aged lady, with a big smile on her face, came out and welcomed me. I thought that she, too, probably thought that I was a customer. I explained to her the purpose of my visit which was for her to be a participant in my research. I was taken aback by Irene's response that made me think twice. She was concerned that many people, especially foreigners and Ugandans from abroad, went to her for information but she never got to know or see the outcome of the studies in which she had participated. I did not know what to tell her or to promise but I informed her that I would do my best to see that something came from my work and that she would probably see the results. She smiled and invited me into her shop. On going inside, I realized this was also her home. Basically it was a single room that had been divided up into three with bark cloth drapes. I could see the end of a bed on one side of the room. She had a couple of chairs and offered me one in what appeared as the sitting room while she sat on the other. I then proceeded to explain to her that I wanted to understand the place of bark cloth in the lives of the Baganda by studying people's experiences with bark cloth. I explained that I wanted her as a participant because, as a seller of bark cloth, I believed she had a wide range of customers and probably knew what they did with the bark cloth. She agreed to participate and signed the consent form.

4.6.2 Irene's economic involvement with bark cloth

I turned on the recorder and asked Irene to describe the kind of work regarding bark cloth that she was involved in. She explained to me that she was involved in the selling of bark cloth, and had done so for over eleven years. Getting involved in the bark cloth selling business was initially her father's idea. He gave her some money, and told her to start the business of selling bark cloth. Irene had an older sister who was involved in the same business, and had also been supported by their father. Apparently, Irene's older sister had benefited from the bark cloth selling business, and, was able to build a house and pay for her children's education. Her sister's success encouraged Irene's father to interest Irene in the same business. Irene welcomed the idea because she too, had seen how her sister had benefited. I got the sense from Irene's failure to read the information sheet earlier as I explained my research and her hesitation when I told her to sign the consent form that she had not gone very far in her education. In most families, if girls did not go far in their education and did not get married, the parents devised means of helping them to do something about their lives. In this case, Irene's father gave his daughters some help to start their own businesses and he encouraged them to fend for themselves. Interestingly, he dictated the type of business they had to get involved in, which was selling bark cloth, although he was not involved in the same kind of business or even in making the bark cloth. This was an indicator that he appreciated Buganda's material culture and wanted to pass this on to his children.

When Irene was given the money to start the bark cloth selling business, she did not question her father's motive, and cited her father's advice verbatim to me, "My child, never cheat your clients and do not waste that money". For Irene, using the money for the

actual purpose that it was given to her was a way of honoring her father, and ensuring that her business was blessed. Over the years, Irene did not disappoint her father who, by the time we met, was dead. She had also not been disappointed by her obedience because, although she had not yet built herself a house, she was able to pay rent, her children's school fees and feed her family. She had opted to set up her business at Musigula's, a place which she described to me as having belonged to a man named Musigula who, many years ago, was known for making and selling bark cloth and the place was named after him. Irene never met Musigula although he was known to her father. However she showed me the site where his house used to be which was across the road from where she lived. In its place was just bush and a big tree which, as she later informed me, was also used as a source of bark cloth.

As Irene described the nature of her work, I got the sense that there was a lot of team work amongst the other bark cloth sellers. My earlier experience, when the other bark cloth sellers tried to lure me from meeting Irene when I first arrived in the area seemed to speak of competition. However, according to Irene, she worked in close collaboration with her colleagues who had shops in that vicinity. She intimated that at times, she had large orders of bark cloth that she could not meet, and had to contact other sellers, who then gave her the bark cloth she needed to meet the order. In other instances, she got a customer who wanted a particular type of bark cloth that she did not have. In such cases she contacted her colleagues and, whoever had it gave it to her and she sold it to the customer and she did the same for her colleagues if they were in a similar situation. Ensuring that she was the one directly involved in the transaction ensured that she

strengthened the ties with her customers who, as she explained to me later, either came back for more or recommended her to others.

She recalled vividly a lucrative venture that came her way through her regular customers. The transaction involved providing bark cloth for a visit from Libya's Head of State, Gaddafi, to the Kingdom of Toro in western Uganda. In preparation for Gaddafi's arrival, the organizers traveled several miles to Irene's place to buy bark cloth specifically for making an outfit to be presented to Gaddafi. They had heard about Irene through her regular customers that she had the best bark cloth they could get. I believe that in Toro Kingdom there were other bark cloth makers, but these people decided to travel to Buganda Kingdom and buy bark cloth from Irene. She informed me that selling bark cloth to those people and, at the same time, knowing what it was to be used for, made her feel proud and determined to continue with her business. The royal purchase was an opportunity to identify her with bark cloth, to extend herself and her services as well as promote Buganda's material culture within and beyond Buganda.

4.6.3 The body as cultural space

As we talked, Irene also recounted certain incidents where she had personal involvement with bark cloth aside from just selling it. She described an incident where the Prime Minister of Buganda had visited their neighborhood and Irene was given the responsibility of serving the chief guests and his entourage on the high table. The Prime Minister had pledged to visit Musigula's place as his first stop during his inaugural tour of Buganda following his election. He chose the site because it was a cultural heritage site where bark cloth and other Kiganda cultural objects like gourds and cowry shells were sold. It was a site where the promotion of certain aspects of Buganda's heritage was

done. During the Prime Minister's visit, Irene had to serve on the high table She wore a traditional Kiganda outfit made from bark cloth. Her colleagues wore traditional outfits made from foreign textiles but she chose to wear bark cloth because it was an overt way of identifying herself as a Muganda, of showing her devotion to and respect for her culture and of identifying herself with the trade she was involved in. As a result, the Prime Minister and his colleagues were very impressed with her. She was proud of what she had done.

As another way of showing her allegiance to Buganda Kingdom, Irene regularly paid homage to the King and kingdom by purchasing Buganda's certificates, the proceeds of which went to the development of the kingdom. Additionally as Buganda's subject, she always presented two to three pieces of bark cloth annually to the King as her offering locally known as *makula.* That bark cloth was used to decorate the palace or places where the King visited but Irene felt pride and respect for Buganda and the opportunity to celebrate her heritage with a tangible object. Presenting bark cloth to the kingdom was for Irene a way of showing allegiance to and ensuring some kind of continuity with one's cultural heritage. But for one to do that meant that they appreciated their cultural heritage and bark cloth became a medium for expressing that appreciation.

Aside from the traditional style bark cloth outfit for royal occasions, Irene also told me that she had a modern style skirt and blouse made from bark cloth. She had worn this outfit about three times. During one of those three times she visited the village where she grew up and where she bought the bark cloth for sale. Going past people on the streets and in the market in her bark cloth outfit, she noticed expressions of surprise and awe on people's faces. In some instances, people walked up to her and touched her

clothes as if to confirm that it was actually bark cloth. Some of them had even thought that she was from the palace. She felt so proud to be dressed in a unique outfit that expressed her cultural identity. She was also able to show others that bark cloth was functional and could be used for other purposes besides the cultural functions it was known for. In such situations bark cloth served to inform the public about the significance of preserving cultural heritage and the need to decipher the messages implicit in objects representative of the cultural heritage of a community or society.

Irene also recalled childhood memories of her grandmothers wearing bark cloth which they wrapped around their bodies especially when going to visit their friends. On a daily basis, they wore foreign textiles and clothes which they changed back into after their visits. However wearing bark cloth during those visits emphasized how special bark cloth was to them. It was probably an intangible way of presenting oneself appropriately amongst their peers and emphasized that one still respected and appreciated their cultural heritage. As a child, seeing her grandmothers wearing bark cloth during their visits informed Irene of how special bark cloth was. As she grew up and made herself bark cloth outfits, she exuded the same pride and confidence that her grandmothers did when they wore bark cloth. Irene also observed how her grandmothers, on returning from their visits, folded the bark cloth neatly and put it away only to be taken out later. She noticed that it still looked as good and fresh as new. When her grandmothers put the bark cloth away and got into their foreign clothes, Irene became aware of the uniqueness of bark cloth which she continued to revere even during her business as a bark cloth seller. She wanted to be widely known as the best bark cloth seller in Uganda and wearing it was one way of emphasizing that role.

4.6.4 Coping with the challenges

Selling bark cloth for Irene meant that she had to be very conversant with a lot of information surrounding the production of bark cloth, and the different types of bark cloth. As a child, Irene had learnt about the process of bark cloth making from her father through the stories that he used to tell her about her grandfather, who had been a bark cloth maker. She was unable to be involved in the craft herself because female involvement in the making of bark cloth in Buganda was considered a taboo. In order to learn, the girls and women had to rely on either story telling or simply observing what the boys and men were doing. Although Irene's father was not a bark cloth maker, Irene took the stories he had shared with her regarding her grandfather's involvement with bark cloth and used these as reference points during her observations of bark cloth making. Over the years, during her visits to the village where she grew up, Irene was drawn to the bark cloth making sites where she made her orders for the bark cloth she sold in the city. These visits enabled her to observe and ask questions about the bark cloth making process and, in turn, that knowledge would help her answer any questions that her customers and researchers asked. As we talked Irene told me how important it was for her to keep herself updated with knowledge about bark cloth which was the business she was involved in.

When I asked her about the different types of bark cloth, Irene was very eager and enthusiastic to show me the different types and to tell me all about them. She showed me the *mukookoowe* cloth, which was obtained from a tree similar to the one where Musigula used to live. She also showed me the *mukaaku* also known as *kitentegere* which was the rough and first bark cloth to be removed from the *mutuba* tree (Appendix VI). The

second and subsequent ones which were better in quality, were known as *kimote* (Appendix VI). These ones came in two types, one had a rich dark brown color on both sides and the other was two toned with the dark brown color on one side and a lighter color on the other. Irene explained that the makers employed different ways in order to improve the appearance and feel of the bark cloth which included steaming the bark to give it a richer brown shade and a softer feel. Another type of bark cloth that was white she explained was obtained from *kirundu* (Appendix VI) but was not as soft as that of the *mutuba*. All this knowledge Irene obtained from her site visits as she placed her orders for her business. She was intrigued by the way a tree bark could yield clothing. She described the entire process as amazing and evidence of the creativity of black people and yet they did not require any complicated technology to produce the bark cloth.

Irene was, however, concerned about the fact that bark cloth could not be easily laundered when it got soiled and, most importantly, it had to be kept dry. Bark cloth needed extreme caution to be kept out of the rain. If rain got onto bark cloth, it would crumple. In cases where bark cloth had to be cleaned with water, the bark cloth was rubbed very gently and spread out to dry. Otherwise it would disintegrate if rubbed strongly and if wrung out. Nevertheless, she demonstrated the strength of bark cloth by asking me to try pulling apart a piece of bark cloth. I tried cautiously but she pulled at it strongly and it did not tear. Irene recalled how as a child she used bark cloth as bedding and when she wet her bed, all she had to do was put the bark cloth in the sun to dry and it would remain intact. However, she informed me that generally, as bark cloth aged, it ripped into shreds which could then be thrown out but even these, she said, retained some kind of strength. She therefore perceived herself as a promoter of a tangible unique cloth

which had intangible meaning and value for the people of Buganda that could be shared with others.

4.6.5 Economic vs cultural tensions

As Irene contemplated her personal and other people's experiences of switching of clothes by wearing bark cloth on special occasions, and foreign styles and textiles for everyday purposes, she felt that there was some kind of confusion regarding what was acceptable to wear in different times and contexts. This was probably one of the effects of colonialism where what the natives had was considered inappropriate and only the foreign materials were appropriate. She expressed her disillusionment at most people for abandoning their cultural traditions for whatever the white man offered them without questioning it. She referred to those people with such mentalities as copy cats who lacked creativity in dealing with their own issues. Irene also recalled a song by a local musician which referred to how the Baganda had abandoned the bark cloth making mallet (*ensaamu*), a metaphor for the cultural traditions, for foreign ways. The song confirmed her observations of how the Baganda seemed to be abandoning their traditions. As we talked, she realized that there was need for people to question their actions and be aware of the repercussions. She expressed the need to appreciate one's heritage by becoming more creative and coming up with ideas that would be beneficial to one's country and culture. By so doing, materials like bark cloth could be improved so that people would use them in all aspects of their lives where they were using foreign textiles just as they did in the past. She also recalled how a friend of hers who, as they shared thoughts on how to be creative, had proposed that she take the best quality bark cloth and make outfits for people to buy. Additionally, she could dye some of the bark cloth and sell it.

Irene welcomed the proposal but was skeptical because she needed proper sizing which she told me was not easy for her to obtain and she somehow put the thought off. As we talked however, Irene felt that she actually could pursue that project and was suddenly excited at the prospect of the public's reaction. She became aware that varying the appearance of bark cloth by dyeing it different colors and making outfits available to people would probably make it more attractive to a wider audience and give bark cloth a special twist without necessarily robbing it of its cultural significance. The venture would also fulfill her desire of being widely known as a promoter of Buganda's bark cloth.

As a woman who was unable to participate in the production of bark cloth, Irene was able to embrace the opportunity that was granted to her by her father who gave her money to start the bark cloth selling business. Growing up in a community where bark cloth making was extensive, Irene developed an interest in learning all she could about bark cloth which was stimulated by her clients' questions about bark cloth. Her earlier experiences of seeing her grandmothers wearing foreign textiles and/or bark cloth, depending on where they were going enabled her to appreciate bark cloth and develop a yearning for the promotion of bark cloth as a cultural textile on a wider scale. She also longed to be widely known as a promoter of bark cloth and was pleased when she noticed her clients originating from not only Buganda but other Kingdoms and even outside Uganda. The proposal from a friend of hers to vary the appearance of bark cloth by dyeing it different colors and making outfits from it made Irene skeptical about how the venture would go. This was probably because, she realized that she would be altering a cultural object and that would required her to contemplate that venture more. As we talked however, she sensed the possibility of how that could turn out into one of the

creative projects she wished many Baganda would pursue instead of copying foreign cultures. Being a woman and therefore prohibited from engaging in bark cloth production did not stop Irene from promoting bark cloth as a seller. Her attitude towards the bark cloth was influenced by her childhood experiences which made her aware of the importance of bark cloth as carrier of Buganda's cultural traditions and, therefore, wearing it was an outward expression of one's appreciation of bark cloth and the culture it represented.

4.7 Charles' story

4.7.1 Meeting Charles

I got to know Charles through Raymond. They had worked together at Kasubi tombs as tour guides. When I mentioned to Raymond that I needed to talk to an artist who painted on bark cloth, he quickly recommended Charles because Charles had painted on bark cloth for a long time. I had read about some artists who had exhibitions in which they showcased painting on various media, particularly bark cloth. I considered trying to locate one of them, and when Raymond mentioned Charles, I considered meeting him and finding out whether he would participate in the study. During one of our visits to Kasubi tombs, Raymond and I decided to drive down to Charles' house to see if he was home. We found Charles at home and he welcomed us into his house. On entering Charles' the house, I looked around and saw several paintings done on bark cloth hung up along the wall and others draped on the chairs, doors and any other surface that could take them. Raymond introduced us and I explained why I was there. Charles seemed excited to be part of such a study and expressed willingness to participate. I showed him

the information sheet and consent form. He read through and signed them. I was happy that I had found someone who seemed passionate about bark cloth. I could not proceed with the interview with Charles that day, so we agreed to meet on another day. Charles said that he was always at home and spent his days painting, so whichever day I chose would be okay with him.

4.7.2 Getting involved with bark cloth

Initially, I thought Charles painted on bark cloth as well as other materials, but when I entered his house on the day of our interview, I saw only piles of bark cloth strewn all over the living room. I realized that he actually used only bark cloth. I was amazed and started wondering what inspired him to paint on bark cloth. Charles informed me that at the beginning of his career as a young artist, he was not really drawn to bark cloth or even painting as such. During high school, he was taught fine art by a Tanzanian man who he referred to as "a great teacher", who was even awarded a medal by Uganda when it gained independence in 1962. That great teacher was very interested in exploring local materials like the earth, plant fibers and others, which he also incorporated in his teaching. However, Charles was not very keen on using local materials even when he did his first bachelor's degree in fine art. So when he decided to pursue a Master's degree in Britain, it was in industrial ceramic design. Unfortunately he developed a very severe depression during his time in Britain, which kept him hospitalized for several months and he was advised to retire on medical grounds. That recommendation was a severe blow to Charles' dreams, but he was not dissuaded from his goals. He returned to Uganda and completed a Post-graduate diploma in education. He then taught for about a year before

the depression returned, and kept on recurring until he decided to follow the doctor's advice to retire.

Retiring for Charles was probably something he was not ready for as a young man. After retiring from teaching, he applied to the President's office for funds to pursue industrial art research in East Africa. He went to Nairobi, Kenya where he linked up with his great teacher and worked in his gallery. During that time Charles made regular visits to Uganda, and it was on one of those visits that his teacher called him up and asked him to bring some bark cloth with him to Nairobi upon his return. Knowing his teacher's love for local materials, Charles took the bark cloth to him and was taken aback when his teacher told him, "You brought it? Why don't you paint on it?". That was the birth of Charles' painting on bark cloth. He had defied the doctors' orders to retire but he felt that he was not equipped well enough to survive on his own. However, his teacher chose to equip him with a skill that he would be able to take on as, and when, his health permitted. The teacher also chose for Charles a material that was part of his heritage to probably alert him that he did not have to look very far in order to be successful.

Nevertheless, Charles was initially not very enthusiastic about painting on bark cloth. He did it for a short while before joining Dar-es-Salaam University in Tanzania as a teacher, despite the depression that kept bothering him. It was during that time that Charles started questioning his defiance of the doctors' orders, and wondered what would happen to him if one day he found himself unemployed due to his illness. He therefore decided to start painting during his free time. He painted miniature pieces and greeting cards on bark cloth,, which he discovered were quite popular and sold fast. During that same time Charles also had a girl friend who was bothered because he spent most of his

time painting. He told her that he needed to do it in case one day he failed to get employment. True to his fears, when Charles returned to Uganda, he applied unsuccessfully to Makerere University for a teaching position. He turned to his bark cloth painting as a means of survival. His determination paid off in 1987 when a card he painted won over all other media in an international Christmas card competition in the United States, and was declared the card of the year. By the time I met Charles, he had taken on his painting seriously and had dedicated all his days to painting on bark cloth, only resting at night. He was so grateful that his life had ended up that way because he considered himself an authority who had mastered working on bark cloth, which was not easy to paint on. He also felt that his experience of searching for fulfillment and acceptance as a person who could make a contribution especially in the education sector, had taught him not to be insistent on what one wanted to do especially if it was not working out. He also believed that it was important to follow God's guidance and not one's impulse.

Charles recalled using bark cloth as bedding during his childhood. As an adult, he believed that he had more comfortable choices on the market, like cotton bed sheets. He did not have to bother himself with bark cloth beddings which he found less comfortable. But like Margaret, Charles had seen the dead being wrapped in bark cloth during his childhood, which made the nights very uncomfortable because he feared he would also end up dead in his sleep. As he grew up and saw bark cloth being used in a variety of ways, like what his teacher showed him, he then realized how harmless it was and the variety of optional uses he could put it to. He was also amused, but at the same time could not blame the people in his neighborhood especially the children who called him a

witch or native doctor because they always saw him with bark cloth. He was sad because the children were not helped by the adults, who he expected to explain and demystify bark cloth to the children. Instead the adults, too, called him a witch doctor. That was probably because most people were aware of native doctors using bark cloth in their rituals and so connected him to the same. Nevertheless, he felt fortunate to have inspired many young people to develop an interest in bark cloth especially as an art material. In this way he helped change the young people's attitudes towards bark cloth.

As a free lance tour guide at Kasubi tombs for almost twenty years, Charles had worked with many young men who were also tour guides and depended on tips from visiting tourists for their survival. He started an art gallery at the tombs where he sold his work to Kasubi site tourists and other visitors, and in addition, he also inspired the young people he worked with to start painting on bark cloth. He felt that they could earn from selling their paintings as a way of survival in addition to the tour guiding which was more or less voluntary work and therefore not financially rewarding. Charles had experienced the search for financial reward during his battle with depression and painting is what eventually provided him with a means of survival. He was therefore pleased and proud of those young people who had agreed to learn from him. He saw the intangible skill of painting on the tangible bark cloth as having a future, long after he was gone. He compared painting on bark cloth to European oil paintings which had survived the test of time and were still being explored, and believed that the same could happen for bark cloth painting.

4.7.3 Crossing borders with bark cloth

Charles described painting on bark cloth as an art. He also described art as a commodity. As such he felt that in order to survive he needed to present his art work appropriately to his customers. Most of Charles' customers were young people who came to Uganda to do research, and those abroad who saw his work or had received some kind of recommendation about him. The tourists within the country saved up their money and went to him specifically to buy paintings, like the market scenery, traditional homesteads, wildlife and the like that reflected their experiences in Uganda. His other customers were rich Americans who preferred big paintings. But he said that the foreign customers paid better than the local ones. Charles explained that he enjoyed painting internationally recognized themes such as women's emancipation, and the East African Community which also interested him (Appendix VII). He was also inspired by traditional art which, he discovered was so popular amongst many of his customers, who also appreciated the natural and unique bark cloth material that he painted on. He also saw selling bark cloth paintings to tourists as a way of promoting bark cloth abroad.

The properties of bark cloth were a concern for Charles regarding comfort and durability. He felt that something needed to be done to address this issue. However, when I asked him whether he wanted to see bark cloth undergoing some kind of development or processing, Charles did not seem very keen. He described an encounter at an exhibition where one artist had showcased bark cloth that had been processed into a water proof material, and could be used as rain wear. Charles said that he was astounded by the resultant material which he said had nothing similar to bark cloth. He was impressed by the artist's efforts at developing the bark cloth but was concerned that, although the artist

referred to his invention as bark cloth, to Charles, it was a hide! He actually described what the artist had done as "killing" the bark cloth, because the processing seemed to have destroyed the natural character of bark cloth. Charles felt that if the artist wanted to make something similar to a hide, he should have used a hide itself or another artificial material. Charles did not understand the meaning of developing something when what one was doing, was basically destroying its natural character. Charles strongly believed that if there were no chemicals that could improve or preserve bark cloth, then it had to be left in its original state. Other materials could be used instead of bark cloth for the purpose like what that man was intending the improved bark cloth to be used for. Experiencing natural bark cloth had more intangible meaning for Charles as opposed to seeing it as a leather-like material. Nevertheless, he still felt that there was an urgent need to preserve the tangible bark cloth without destroying its natural character and losing its intangible wealth.

Charles also expressed concern that developing bark cloth would ultimately disadvantage the makers, since it was unclear who would benefit most from the development of the bark cloth. He wondered about the costs of the entire process which involved the primary producers who made the bark cloth, the middlemen who would have to modify or develop it before it got to him, the artist, and to other users and then to the consumers. As such he wondered how he would charge his clients because of the process it had to go through. On the other hand, Charles saw bark cloth as a material that provided variety for artists to do their work. As we talked, Charles got up and went into an adjoining room and brought in heaps of bark cloth paintings. I was astounded because he already had over a hundred paintings spread on almost every surface in his sitting

room with others mounted on the walls. His paintings were grouped according to the themes he had talked about earlier, and he hoped that one day he would put on an exhibition of his paintings. While I looked at the various paintings that Charles brought out, I wondered how he had managed to paint all of them and how long it had taken him.

Charles had also tried to interest his children in using bark cloth as an art material. He had a son who made batiks from bark cloth and sometimes relied on his father to market his work. In return, Charles' son helped him with purchasing the bark cloth Charles used for his paintings. Charles wanted me to meet his son who lived a few houses away from him. Before I left the house, he asked me to sign his visitor's book while quoting Karl Marx, "a rich man knows his contacts". He probably believed that once one knew the right people he could get to whatever and wherever he wanted. After signing his book, we left the house and Charles took me over to his son's house. He introduced us and explained to his son that I was researching bark cloth and it would be nice for us to talk. I was amused that the son immediately started explaining to me the importance of bark cloth. I informed him that I needed to explain my research and obtain his consent. We also needed to agree on a time to meet, but he informed me that he was leaving the country for a few weeks. We exchanged phone numbers but, unfortunately, we never got together. Nevertheless, it was very interesting to see a father who had taught his son about bark cloth and the son was eager to tell all he knew about bark cloth.

4.8 Sally's story

4.8.1 Meeting Sally

Deciding on having Sally as a participant in my study was not a very difficult decision to make. All I needed was her permission to participate. Sally was one of the first top fashion designers who stormed the fashion scene in Uganda in the early 2000s. She was famous for using African textiles, designs and styles but, more importantly for my study, she was one of the very few designers who dared to use bark cloth. I felt that Sally had a reason for turning to African textiles as an inspiration for her work and I wanted to know more about her experience. I located Sally's newly acquired fashion studio, and set out to make an appointment with her. When I arrived at the studio gate, a security guard let me in and I was immediately impressed by the amount of work she had put into her fashion environ. It was actually a house-turned-studio which was enclosed in a wall fence with a large parking lot, and it seemed like there was some construction or renovation underway. I entered the studio through an open door which led to a reception desk, and I was welcomed by two very stylish women. Behind the reception were large French windows overlooking a large garden that seemed to be undergoing landscaping. It had different levels and I had a feeling that the garden was being prepared into a space for fashions shows and the like. I was impressed by what seemed like very industrious ideas.

I explained to the two stylish ladies that I was conducting research and I needed to talk to Sally and find out if she wanted to participate in it. They informed me that Sally was not around and they gave me her telephone number so I could contact her and make an appointment. I then placed the information sheet and consent form in an envelope and

requested them to pass the envelope on to Sally so that, when I called her, she would have an idea about what I was talking about. I then left Sally's fashion studio. Sally was actually the hardest of my participants to contact because, whenever I called her, I was always put on the answering machine and the messages I left were never returned. I was frustrated and, at one time, even contemplated leaving Sally out of my research. After over two months of calling, my call was finally picked up by Sally who, after I explained more about my research, agreed to participate in my study. She then gave me a 3:00 pm appointment on a Friday afternoon and asked me to be on time because she had a lot of work to do. I was relieved that she had finally agreed to see me and I was determined to do everything to keep the appointment.

On the day I was to meet with Sally I made sure that I was fifteen minutes early, to avoid creating a situation which could change her mind. I was ushered into a waiting room by a stylish receptionist, and I sat down on a chair beside three ladies. As we sat and waited for Sally, we started small talk and I found out that all three ladies also had 3:00 pm appointments. I was concerned because I did not see how she would see the four of us at the same time. I turned my attention to a photo album that one lady passed to me. The album contained some pictures taken during fashion shows in which Sally had exhibited her designs. The fashions included mainly African textiles, designs and styles. I also saw a couple of styles that had bark cloth incorporated into them. I was, however, concerned that I did not see many bark cloth designs. I had seen many of Sally's bark cloth designs in the Ugandan online newspapers during my time in Edmonton, Canada. A few moments later, Sally came out of her office. She was elegant in an African inspired style dress and matching earrings. She spoke to each of the three women and rescheduled

appointments with them and then, to my surprise, Sally invited me to her office! I was elated because initially, I thought that she was also going to reschedule our appointment, but she chose to honor it.

As I entered Sally's office, I felt relieved that I was finally able to meet with her. She sat down behind a massive desk and offered me a chair on the opposite side of the desk. I proceeded to explain about my research and asked her if she wanted to participate in the study. Sally agreed to participate and she pulled out an envelope from her drawer which contained the consent form and information sheets I had left behind earlier for her to sign. They were all signed. I was impressed that she had actually taken the time to read and sign my forms. Sally then informed me that she had a very tight schedule and was in and out of the country during the time I was trying to contact her earlier. I informed her that I was impressed by her focus on African designs specifically those involving bark cloth. I asked her how she got interested in them and she informed me that her original goal when she came onto the fashion scene was to make a difference, and the only way to achieve that was to be different. Different for Sally meant breaking away from the popular imported designs from United Kingdom, China, Taiwan and the United States, and using her own ancestral roots which she felt were deeply set inside of her. She wanted her designs to express who she was and what she enjoyed doing: being Ugandan or African. For Sally, there was no option other than employing African-inspired designs and she applauded herself for her success. She measured the extent of her success from the way she inspired others in the fashion business including boutique importers and fashion designers in Uganda. She felt that unless one mentioned Africa or Uganda in an outfit, they would not be successful.

4.8.2 Local vs International identity

Sally felt that if she was going to use African textiles, she needed to include something Ugandan and, for her, bark cloth was the most important textile. She chose to include bark cloth in her designs because it was, for her, the most original material in Uganda associated with clothing, and was linked to the identity of Buganda and Uganda in general. She even believed that whoever had bark cloth elsewhere in Africa must have got it from Uganda, because, for her bark cloth was Uganda's signature. She was perturbed by the German firm that had acquired some rights to Ugandan bark cloth and was exporting a lot of it. She even described a time when she needed bark cloth for her work but was shocked to discover that there was no bark cloth on the market! All the bark cloth that was being produced was being exported to Germany. Sally was very concerned that bark cloth would suffer the same fate as Uganda's coffee which, after export, came back in Nescafe packs that were ten times more expensive than the original coffee. She said that such situations arose from failure of Ugandans to improve their products. Uganda was no longer one of the world's largest producers of coffee and cotton, and she believed that bark cloth was on the same path. Sally also felt that if other people could improve Uganda's products, it would give them more value as the products would be made more user-friendly.

Improving Ugandan products like bark cloth was, for Sally, a very key element if she was to succeed in her business. Although she loved using bark cloth as a traditional textile, she felt that it lacked the properties that she needed to make her clients happy. She was perturbed because bark cloth could not be washed especially when mixed and matched with other fabrics, because its pigment ran into and discolored the other fabrics

during.laundry. Sally was forced to turn from her ancestral fabric and concentrate on other African textiles that had more desirable characteristics. Sally did not abandon bark cloth completely since some of her clients loved it, because they found it a very creative way of attaining a cultural and yet modern effect. Initially, the mixing and matching of bark cloth with other fabrics was well received by her clients but when the bark cloth pigment ran into the other fabrics during laundry, her clients were discouraged. Sally then became more creative by using it more as a decorative accessory on the garments like buttons, belts, pockets and the like, in order to please those clients who remained faithful to bark cloth. Those clients had to then remove the bark cloth parts from the garments and stitch them back on after washing the garments. Sally was hopeful that the foreign interest in bark cloth would help to improve it and thus make it more appealing to a wider clientele.

As we talked, I was curious to know what the general attitudes of Sally's clientele was towards bark cloth. She told me that some of her clients loved bark cloth so much that they could do anything to have it in their wardrobes, including removing bark cloth parts from their clothing before laundry and stitching them back on. Sally felt that those clients' love for bark cloth stemmed from their appreciation of bark cloth as rare and beautiful with a very rich color. Some of her clients were more casual and regarded bark cloth as an ancient textile that did not fit with the modern trends. Others associated bark cloth with death since bark cloth was, for hundreds of years, widely used in wrapping the dead, whereas the more religious clients associated bark cloth with traditional practices which they regarded as pagan and ungodly. She felt that people needed to be more informed and open about traditional textiles although some of the attitudes towards

traditional artifacts and practices that were passed down the generations were not necessarily positive. She considered herself as someone who was trying to change some of the negative attitudes people had towards bark cloth, because people looked up to her for fashion trends, so they also considered bark cloth to be acceptable as she had embraced it.

As a fashion leader and a trend setter, Sally believed that she had made an impact through introducing bark cloth onto the fashion scene, even though her involvement in it had reduced greatly. She was proud to have marketed bark cloth beyond Uganda and even caught the attention of international media like CNN and BBC, who had also interviewed her. Nevertheless, she felt like a lone voice in a desert where what she was talking about did not seem to attract the desired interest in Uganda. People seemed very slow in picking up bark cloth as a resource that they could use in various aspects of their daily lives. She was, however, pleased with the president of Uganda who seemed interested in textiles and promoting the local producers but she felt that the situation warranted more people to get together and make an impact. Sally also told me that she had heard of some people who were trying to improve bark cloth in Uganda which was impressive. However she had not come across any improved version of bark cloth, so she could not say for certain that the improved bark cloth existed. She also thought that probably the improvement was not successful, and that was why the improved bark cloth was not on the market yet. However, she said that if improved bark cloth ever got to the market, she would use it.

Sally attributed the slow response of Ugandans to using bark cloth and other local products to a deep-rooted poor mentality that most Ugandans had. She felt that Ugandans

lacked the self esteem and confidence to stand up for what was theirs and had to rely on foreigners or local producers with brand names to give the product value. She described Ugandans as classy people who only wore imported outfits. If an outfit was locally made, it had to have a brand name for it to sell. This placed extra pressure on local designers like her to build their businesses and develop a brand name. It was her brand name that enabled Sally to be recognized locally and internationally, although initially, it was the international recognition that got her the local recognition. After the big international media firms like CNN, BBC, South Africa Broadcasting Corporation and MNET published Sally's success, Ugandans then believed that what she had was good. As such she believed that if she accessed improved bark cloth and used it in her designs, more Ugandans would be drawn to it and then bark cloth would be more acceptable as a heritage oriented but fashionable textile. Sally was confident that there was still hope for bark cloth if Ugandans changed their mentality towards local textiles. She was sure Ugandans would support her efforts because they believed in her and, took pride in her work, as long as they realized the value of what they had, who they were, and what they could do.

4.9 Sarah's story

4.9.1 Meeting Sarah

Another participant I wanted for my study was a seller of bark cloth crafts. I anticipated that such a person would inform me about the kind of people who bought bark cloth crafts and for what reasons. I believed that such a person would have a special attachment to bark cloth, which prompted them to get involved with selling it. I also felt

that a seller's perspective would also provide me with an exploration of how individuals negotiated between the economic and cultural importance of bark cloth. Deciding on a participant in that category was not so difficult, because I was aware of the cultural village located at Uganda's National Theatre. That cultural village was famous as a source of various crafts including those made from bark cloth. All I had to do was approach whoever was in charge and they would direct me to a person who sold mainly bark cloth artifacts.

One hot morning, I went to the National Theatre cultural village and inquired at one of the shops the whereabouts of the cultural village chairperson's office. The cultural village was basically a semi circular layout of small semi-detached lock-up shops surrounding an expanse of land in their midst. My first aim was to inform the authorities of my presence, then inquire about a possible participant. I was directed to one of the shops which I was informed belonged to the cultural village chairperson. When I arrived at the shop, I was welcomed by a middle-aged lady who proceeded to ask me if I needed any help picking out some items. I informed her that I wanted to speak to the chairperson. She informed me that she was a shop attendant, but the chairperson, was out of the country and would be back the following week. I asked her to give me the chairperson's telephone contact so that I could contact her and make an appointment. She gave me the number and I left. As we talked, I looked around the shop and noticed an array of beautiful artifacts made from several materials including bark cloth. The artifacts were grouped according to materials and I noticed the different objects that were made from different materials. I was impressed and I decided I would request Sarah to be a participant in my study.

The following week, a day after Sarah was scheduled to return, I called the number I had been provided with but it was unavailable. I called the number again the following day with the same results, but on the third day she answered my call. I explained that I was interested in doing research with someone from the cultural village and I would be honored to have her as a participant if we could meet and I explain my research in more detail. She agreed to meet and we made an appointment for the next day at 11:00 am. On the agreed day, I arrived at 11:00 am and I was again welcomed by the shop attendant who asked me if I had spoken to Sarah. I told her that we had agreed to meet at the shop at 11:00am that day. Sarah was not yet in, so the attendant offered me a chair. As I waited for Sarah's arrival, I walked around the shop and looked at the beautifully crafted artifacts. I took more time with the bark cloth artifacts which consisted of pencil holders, tissue boxes, wallets, purses, hats, table mats, book markers etc (Appendix VIII). I was amazed at the exoticization of the bark cloth! People were inspired to make foreign inspired objects out of bark cloth. That informed me that bark cloth could be used far more extensively than I thought, and if improved, its options would be endless. At about 12:00 noon, Sarah arrived at the shop and was welcomed by the shop attendant who also informed her that I was around. As Sarah entered the shop, I stood up from my seat and we exchanged greetings. She then sat down behind a desk on one side of the shop and asked me about my work. I explained to her that I was interested having her as a participant in my study. I was particularly interested in her experiences with bark cloth including the selling of bark cloth artifacts. I gave her the information sheet and consent form which she read and signed after about ten minutes.

4.9.2 Spearheading the bark cloth-artifact movement

After reading and signing the information sheet and consent form, Sarah asked me when we would begin our conversations and I told her it was up to her. She was willing to start right away and I was thrilled. I asked Sarah was how she came up with the idea of having a crafts shop and choosing to include bark cloth in her wares. Sarah informed me that she had been a Woman Representative Member of Parliament who had been elected through affirmative action. At that time, besides the full fledged Member of Parliament (MP), a woman representative was also elected from each district and Sarah was such a woman. During one of the parliamentary sessions, an MP who was also in the theatre business, proposed, as part of the 1994 Pan Africa Conference, an exhibition of Ugandan crafts. Each woman MP was charged with collecting crafts from her district and bringing them in for the exhibition. While most of the women MP Representatives were not thrilled by the idea, Sarah was one of three who expressed interest in it.

Prior to the preparation of the Pan African Conference exhibition, Sarah had had several women that she represented approach her to buy their crafts. Those rural women made crafts that they took to her, requesting her to sell them, probably to her colleagues in parliament. They saw her as well placed in society and probably linked to possible sources of income. Since she was their representative, they probably envisioned that she was their way out of poverty, if only she could find a market for their products. Unfortunately for Sarah, selling those crafts was not as easy as it appeared to them. For some of them, selling a single craft was the only way to get their child back to school or even of having food on the table. Sarah empathized with them and instead of finding buyers, she paid for whatever products they brought. Buying from one woman meant

buying from all of them, so during fundraisings, the women would bring more crafts with the expectation that Sarah would buy them. Those experiences with the women enabled her to embrace the idea of exhibiting and selling crafts to the participants of the Pan African Conference. However, since not many woman MP Representatives were interested in the venture, Sarah and her colleagues invited other members of the general public that were interested in showcasing and selling their work, to participate. The site of her shop was the original site she occupied during that conference. Although most of the shops were at the time of my study semi-permanent, they were temporary shelters during the Pan African Conference and some of the future plans entailed making the structures more permanent.

Despite all the effort that Sarah and her colleagues had placed in establishing the National Theatre cultural village, she was disappointed by the government's passiveness at honoring and recognizing Ugandan visual culture. She felt that in addition to music, dance and drama, the crafts industry needed to be recognized as the most tangible expression of culture. The crafts were made mainly from traditional materials that were obtained locally like bamboo, straw, wood, reeds, banana fibers, palm leaves, and of course, bark cloth. At the time of our meeting, Sarah was strongly advocating for a government policy that promoted traditional crafts, dyes and materials, which would, in turn, encourage craft makers to transform their skills into making household items that could be used on an every day basis and not just for sale to tourists and travelers. That way, the items would also be used by Ugandans on a daily basis and they end up buying more and more. The craft industry would develop because it would be targeting both home and tourist markets. Sarah therefore did not see herself as an advocate for only bark

cloth crafts but for traditional crafts and material culture in general. Nevertheless, she felt drawn to the color and texture of bark cloth which she really appreciated.

4.9.3 Connecting with the past through bark cloth

Bark cloth also made Sarah feel connected to her ancestral past. She recognized bark cloth as the main ancestral object or material that was used for a variety of purposes including traditional religion rituals, as bedding, clothing, and shrouds for the dead. Most of the uses of bark cloth were more pronounced before colonization. However, she expressed her awareness of bark cloth as still being used for making crafts, during traditional practices like wrapping the dead, although this was slowly being replaced by imported textiles. As she described the different past and present uses of bark cloth, Sarah recalled a vivid memory of her cousin who died during the Ugandan liberation war around 1983/84. Although that was a tumultuous period, Sarah's cousin was carefully wrapped in bark cloth and buried in a marked grave in the battle field. It was amazing that even during the war, the Baganda took time to look for bark cloth to wrap a body in and bury it. As she told me the story, I envisioned that that person must have been very special to receive such a burial but also those who buried him must have had a lot of respect for the traditional custom of wrapping bodies in bark cloth. When the war was over about three or four years later, the father of her late cousin asked the President at that time for his son's body which was then exhumed and returned to Sarah's cousin's family. In Buganda, a dead person is only buried after proper identification, so Sarah's cousin's body had to be unwrapped to ascertain that he was the one. What shocked Sarah was that the bark cloth had mummified the body in such a way that all the bodily features were identifiable and there was no mistake that the body belonged to her cousin. Maybe

the people who buried him also anticipated that he would be exhumed, so they buried him in a way that he would be preserved. That story also reminded Sarah of how traditionally food was wrapped in bark cloth to preserve its texture and prevent pests from getting at it.

4.9.4 Contemplating the future of bark cloth

Sarah, however, was concerned about the passing on of craft making skills to the younger generations. Besides selling crafts including those made from bark cloth, she had a social back ground that guided her as she related to her suppliers, mainly women from rural areas. Apparently, only a few had bothered to interest their children in the making of crafts. Sarah went beyond just buying the crafts from her clients and encouraged them to interest their children in the making of crafts. She felt that in the event of the clients' deaths or if the children dropped of school, the children would have no skill to turn to as a source of survival. She recalled with fondness one of her bark cloth suppliers who lived over 20 kilometers from Kampala where Sarah was based. That lady had four children aged seven, eight, nine and ten whom she had taught how to make bark cloth artfacts following Sarah's encouragement. The lady made the crafts at home and her children brought them to the city for marketing. Sarah was touched when she saw the youngest of the children delivering the crafts. She was concerned that people would cheat her. Sarah gave the girl a book so that she would record what was delivered and showed her how to keep her book without losing it on her way back home. That girl then proceeded to the market in down town Kampala to buy bark cloth for her mother's use. Sarah was shocked when she learned what the seven year old was doing and asked the girl if she knew where to buy the bark cloth. The girl said she did. The little girl also said that she knew how to identify the best bark cloth and described it as dark, soft and without any holes. She said

that she had to ensure that she chose the best bark cloth otherwise her mother would be very upset.

As Sarah narrated that story I shook my head in amazement because I realized that younger people are more receptive to what they are introduced to at an early age. Furthermore, I realized the role that material culture played in bridging gaps across generations if its importance and significance is introduced early in life and nurtured. That would also ensure its continuity and development. For Sarah, the craft being made was not the most salient. What stood out for her was the need to pass on the skill of creating the material culture so it would be meaningful to the younger generation, who would, if desired, have a way of survival. Sarah had a soft spot for families that made crafts and felt attached to them especially when she got to know their stories. In some instances the children brought her their crafts to sell but the crafts would be so poorly made that Sarah would have no way of selling them. In such cases, she would buy them and place them in her car or just hang them in her shop with no intention of selling them. By not rejecting the children's crafts, Sarah was nurturing the children's skills and their interest in traditional material culture.

Sarah felt that bark cloth would not be used as apparel as much as it was in the past probably because of the wide variety of textiles on the market. She was confident that it would continue to be used as ornaments, in the entertainment industry and as an artistic medium. She felt that the fact that bark cloth could not be laundered was a disadvantage and hoped that one day someone would discover a way of dealing with it. She told me about a surprise she had on a recent trip to Kenya, where she saw beautiful paintings on bark cloth. She was perturbed that what she thought belonged to Uganda

was being used as a media for art in another country. At first Sarah seemed to avoid talking much about her family but, as she told me about the bark cloth she had found in Kenya, Sarah revealed that she actually had a son who used to do screen printing on bark cloth. Her step son had also given her a piece of bark cloth when she lost her mother and she treasured it. In Buganda, a person who loses someone is usually given bark cloth, which may either be a physical piece of bark cloth or foreign textile or money. Her son chose to give her a piece of bark cloth which was probably the most traditional way of expressing his condolences especially for someone who had already demonstrated her love for traditional material culture.

Sarah felt that people needed to be sensitized concerning their traditions especially in relation to traditional material objects, because she felt that the material objects carried a lot of traditional meaning which could be lost with lack of interest in them. She appreciated the interest from the international market as tourists were the best customers in buying bark cloth artifacts. Bark cloth was unique and easy to carry and most of the bark cloth artefacts were small, in the form of book marks, table mats, etc. However, despite the response from the tourists, Sarah felt that the government needed to step in and encourage the production of traditional crafts so that they could be used on both local and international scenes. As I thanked Sarah for her time, I again requested to take some pictures to which she consented and I went ahead and took pictures. I also promised her that I would go back to buy some artifacts because I found them very interesting. I also felt a deep connection with bark cloth and I wanted something to carry with me back to Canada so that I had a part of my ancestry with me even when I was far from home.

4.10 Penny's story

4.10.1 Meeting Penny

During the time I was taking the pictures in Sarah's shop, a woman carrying a fish-shaped cushion made from bark cloth came into Sarah's shop. She talked to Sarah and, from their exchange, I overheard them negotiating costs of bark cloth crafts that the lady had supplied earlier to Sarah. I had considered having a person who made crafts from bark cloth and I had considered asking Sarah to direct me to one of them. Before the woman left, I asked Sarah's shop attendant if the woman made the bark cloth crafts for their shop. The attendant said that the woman made some of the crafts they sold in the shop. I told the attendant that I wanted to talk to the lady and it would be nice if we were introduced. The attendant briefed Sarah and the woman and I were introduced. Her name was Penny. I then informed Penny about what I was doing, and expressed the need to talk to someone who made bark cloth crafts for sale. She became very excited and asked to be the one I talked to because she made only bark cloth crafts and had done so for so many years. I was glad that someone else was willing to participate in my study. However, she was on her way back to her stall where every Friday, she put out her goods for sale. I agreed to go with her and so we would talk while she oversaw her goods. I gathered my things and said my goodbyes to Sarah and her attendant, with the promise of returning to buy some artifacts from them later.

I then followed Penny to her stall which was about a twenty minute walk from Sarah's shop. Penny's wares were displayed on a piece of bark cloth laid on the ground. Around her, many other craft makers also had their crafts displayed on either bark cloth or mats on the ground. The area where the crafts market was located was a large expanse

of land between the railway station and a major road in the city centre. Apparently, the crafts makers came out every Friday mainly from rural areas and displayed their products for people to buy. Most of the people from the crafts village bought the crafts from the makers and sold them at twice or more the price than the crafts makers did. When I looked down at Penny's goods, she had only bark cloth crafts. She had table mats, maps, book marks, cushions, photo frames, wallets, bags amongst other crafts, and all were made from bark cloth (Appendix IX). She laid out another piece of bark cloth on the ground and invited me to sit down so we could talk.

4.10.2 Negotiating the bark cloth experience

As I sat down, I explained again to Penny about my interest in talking to people who were working with bark cloth in one way or another, in order to find out their experiences with bark cloth. I turned on the recorder, obtained her verbal consent and proceeded to ask how she got interested in selling bark cloth crafts. She informed me that she actually made them and even got out her needle and sisal thread. She proceeded to put some finishing touches on a pile of maps as we talked. She then introduced me to an older woman who was seated next to her on the ground. Penny informed me that the woman was an aunt of hers, who raised her in the city. Penny's aunt is the one who introduced Penny to making crafts from bark cloth. Although Penny had the option of making baskets or any other crafts made from other materials, she found that crafts made from bark cloth were less demanding because they did not involve as many materials. She also identified with bark cloth as part of her ancestry. She felt that bark cloth was a symbol of Buganda's identity and, therefore, of her identity as a Muganda. As such she

felt drawn to her aunt's idea of making crafts from bark cloth and was proud of what she was doing as she grew up. She was also involved in farming.

When Penny was old enough to start a family, she realized that making crafts from bark cloth was not very lucrative despite the amount of work involved. She opted to join the fish mongering business. Her aunt was not very impressed by Penny's decision to join the fish business because, in Buganda, a woman is advised to stay away from fish because of its odor. Fish odor is difficult to get rid of and, with longer exposure, it is even more difficult. Girls are usually advised to stay away from fish because the odor makes them repulsive to men and thus decreases their opportunities of finding a partner. At first Penny ignored her aunt's pleas. But after she built a house for her family from fish mongering, she gave up the stressful life of traveling long distances looking for fish to sell and leaving the home abandoned. She decided to go back to making bark cloth crafts with farming on the side. Although her income from bark cloth crafts was not a lot, Penny managed to supplement it with farming and had educated her two children, one of whom was pursuing his studies in electrical engineering and the other was a teacher. Penny's experience with fish also inspired her to create a fish shaped cushion which other bark cloth crafts makers had also copied (Appendix IX).

Penny had tried to involve her children in the bark cloth craft making business but they found it very stressful and in any case they were occupied with their studies. Initially, Penny experienced a lot of resistance from her children because they were uncomfortable with her involvement with bark cloth. They told their mother that involvement with bark cloth would make people think that their family was involved in witchcraft and the exhuming of the dead, because all they knew about bark cloth was that

it was used as shroud for the dead. They were concerned that people would think that the bark cloth she used to make her crafts was from the dead they exhumed and probably ate! Penny was alarmed by her children's feelings but she did not give in to their pleas that she gives up making crafts from bark cloth. She explained to them that she was finding a way of getting income to support them. After sometime, the children noticed that their mother was earning good money from the bark cloth crafts and that gave them a lot of confidence. They were also able to explain to their friends, who were inquisitive about what their mother did, that their mother earned money to support them from making and selling bark cloth crafts.

As a child, Penny had grown up with her aunt in the city where she slept on what she called "a well made bed" because it did not have bark cloth on it. At that time she was aware of bark cloth as shrouds for the dead, and was shocked to find people using it as bedding when she visited her grandmother in the village. She wondered how and why people would sleep on bark cloth but when she asked her grandmother, she was told that bark cloth was warmer than a blanket. As she grew up, Penny got to know that bark cloth was an ancestral cloth that even her forefathers had used before the introduction of foreign textiles. As she shared her experiences with me, she underscored the importance of having a cultural identity, a virtue that she acquired when she understood the importance of bark cloth as part of her cultural heritage. With that realization, she was able to obtain some bark cloth to use as bedding. Penny felt that it was failure to honor heritage that was causing some of the killer diseases that were wiping out many Ugandans. If one's forefathers wore the bark cloth, then it was imperative that the

descendants did not ignore it but, instead, respected the intangible aspect of tangible culture or material culture.

4.10.3 Negotiating the future of bark cloth

During that interview, I was dressed in jean trousers which, like any other trousers, were not considered very respectable dress for a Muganda woman. Penny mentioned how some people, especially women, ignored their ancestral heritage including bark cloth and instead embraced foreign clothing like trousers. She, however, expressed appreciation at my putting on trousers while still having an interest in bark cloth. This was a sign that I was aware of my identity although my dressing showed otherwise. She felt that it was important for people of my age and younger to be aware of our cultural identity because there would come a time when we would be expected to take on cultural responsibility like being an heir. In case we rejected or mishandled our responsibility, the dead would attack us and our children, a situation which would turn out to be embarrassing. Penny's explanation emphasized the intangibility of cultural heritage. She expressed her frustration at the trend of things at that time because, in the past, children were not susceptible to many illnesses as they were protected by bark cloth beddings and herbs that were used for drinking and bathing the ill. Those were being replaced by injections. She further expressed her concern about her niece whose mother had died of AIDS. Penny did not seek modern medical assistance for the child but instead used bark cloth and local herbs, plus praying to her ancestors to intercede for the child's life. The child had experienced extreme illness, but with Penny's intercession the child recovered and gained weight and was now fourteen years old. Penny also said that the child was very helpful in the garden and in the making of bark cloth artifacts.

However, like Penny's children, her niece was getting fed up of making bark cloth crafts. Penny blamed Christianity for the negative attitudes of the youth towards bark cloth. Most youth regarded bark cloth as unchristian and Satan's abode and as such, they avoided it. In this way they abandoned their cultural traditions since bark cloth was a major part of most of them. She held the born again Christians responsible for derailing the people from their cultural past and yet she could not comprehend how Christianity would separate one from their past or from believing in one's ancestry. As a result of the Christians' negative attitudes towards bark cloth, most people were scared of getting involved with bark cloth which, in the long run, lowered the local market of bark cloth crafts.

Penny also revealed her awareness of the ongoing exportation of bark cloth to Germany. She had been told that one did not have to make the time consuming bark cloth crafts. Instead, all one had to do was sell a few pieces of bark cloth to the Germans and the monetary reward would be great. She, however, saw that exporting bark cloth to Germany was an opportunity that educated people had more access to. She was willing to send some bark cloth to Germany through some educated people if she knew any who had access to the Germans. Penny was however pleased that Buganda's bark cloth was receiving international recognition and was confident that as long as the trees from which bark cloth was obtained were not extinct, Buganda would still have control of that part of its heritage. She also envisioned the exportation of bark cloth as an opportunity for more people to get involved with bark cloth because there was a market for it, but she was concerned that the bark cloth making process needed some kind of intervention because

few people were involved in it. There was need to interest the youth who preferred selling bark cloth artifacts to bark cloth making.

Like Sarah, Penny was disappointed by the government's failure to recognize the importance of the country's material culture, which was the tangible aspect of culture and that included the crafts made from traditional materials. She felt there was no direct support from the government for small scale industries like hers. Instead the bark cloth crafts makers were being introduced to credit companies to help improve the crafts industry but these did not want to deal with low income groups. The craft makers also lacked a permanent place to sell their merchandise. They were constantly being allocated a space and then they would be sent off to another area, which made Penny feel unwanted and unappreciated. Efforts to have the crafts makers unite always failed because of corruption amongst the leaders. She often fell back to farming which paid for most of her expenses and was focusing on seeing her children through school and completing a shop project she had started on. Although Penny had a clear understanding of bark cloth as part of her cultural heritage, she desired for the same knowledge to be disseminated to the younger generations. She was persistent in remaining involved in making bark cloth crafts because that was the only way she would contribute to passing on that part of her ancestral past.

4.11 Pat's Story

4.11.1 Meeting Pat

A cultural officer from the central government was another person that I wanted to participate in my study, I wanted to know if there was any policy regarding bark cloth

in Uganda. I wanted to know the government's stand on bark cloth in relation to promotion, preservation and production in order to determine the potential of bark cloth as a cultural resource. I went to the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development one early morning at about 8:00am, with the aim of catching the officers in charge before they went about their day's activities. I entered a long hall way with several doors leading off to offices on each side of the hall way, but there was no sign of any one in any of the offices. A door opened, and a man came into the hallway and asked me if I needed any assistance. I told him I wanted to talk to the Assistant Commissioner who was also the head of the department of culture and he informed me that she was away and would be back the following week.

On Monday the following week, I went to the Department of Culture in the morning and, like the last time, there was no sign of anyone. As I stood in the hallway waiting for someone to show up, a door opened and a woman stepped out of one of the offices. When our eyes met, we screamed and ran into each other's arms. She was my former school mate, Pat. I was happy that I had found someone I knew who would help me. Pat invited me to her office and offered me a seat. I explained the reason for my visit and she informed me that the Assistant Commissioner was not yet in office. She also told me that she was one of the cultural officers in the Department of Culture and would gladly assist me with whatever information I wanted. I had my participant from the government. I gave her more details on my research and handed her the information sheet and consent form. She promised to look through them and to give them back on the day we were to have our full discussion on my research. We then agreed on a day, which was about a week away and I left Pat's office.

4.11.2 Influences of policy on bark cloth

On the day of my meeting with Pat, I arrived at the Department of Culture at 8:00 am and went straight to her office. I knocked on the door and she asked me to come in and offered me a seat after we exchanged greetings. In front of her was a thick document which she seemed to have been reading while she waited for me. She handed me my signed consent form and I turned on my recorder so we could start our conversation. I then asked Pat to tell me about any policies regarding bark cloth. She informed me that the Department of Culture did not have a policy specifically focused on bark cloth. She and her colleagues were in the process of developing a policy on how to manage tangible and intangible aspects of culture in Uganda. I was surprised that there was no policy in place. Additionally, Pat revealed that the policy was not going to address specific cultural elements but was going to handle culture on a broader level. Despite the fact that Uganda had over fifty tribal groups and it is through those groups that culture developed, the policy was to address regional cultural issues and not tribal issues.

Pat described the collective effort that was involved in putting together the file that was forwarded to UNESCO prior to the 2005 proclamation of bark cloth in Uganda as an example of the world's intangible culture. She said that various stake holders including the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social development where the Department of Culture was housed, and the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry, contributed to putting together the file. Interviews were carried out in various communities where bark cloth was produced. The collective effort in putting together the file underscored the various levels at which bark cloth could be approached. Pat also expressed awareness of some money that had been provided by UNESCO to develop bark cloth in Buganda. She

was disappointed that Bunyoro and Busoga were involved in the data collection because they too made bark cloth, but the file seemed to lean more towards Buganda. That showed that the Baganda were probably a level higher in bark cloth production than other ethnic communities. Pat however felt the need to advocate for other bark cloth producing communities like the Basoga who used clay soil to make their bark cloth black which was a unique creation they added to bark cloth especially for ceremonial purposes.

4.11.3 Bark cloth as a symbol of identity

Although Pat did not describe many personal experiences with bark cloth, she expressed awareness of several uses to which bark cloth was put especially in Buganda. She informed me that bark cloth had been used in Buganda for a long time and was still being used particularly during burial, in making crafts and in fashion design. She described some exhibitions that she had attended involving bark cloth including some where artists used bark cloth as back ground for their paintings. Pat felt that such shifts from more traditional uses gave bark cloth life because people did not see it in situations involving death with which it was associated for a long time. People's attitudes towards bark cloth would change. Additionally, she was hopeful that the international recognition that the art of bark cloth making had received through the UNESCO declaration would also provide a different perspective altogether. People would be more drawn to the bark cloth because they saw it moving into the future.

Pat considered UNESCO's recognition of bark cloth as a sign of Buganda's cultural renaissance, because it was in line with the ongoing international wave that recognized culture as an important factor during the globalization era. She was pleased that UNESCO had reminded the Baganda that, even during a time when there was

pressure for everything to be similar, it was okay to be different. She was therefore convinced that respect for bark cloth, especially in Buganda, would go to another level. She believed that bark cloth was highly respected as a key feature during almost all traditional practices. For one to prove that they were truly from Buganda, they had to demonstrate that they had some kind of linkage to bark cloth during these practices. For her, bark cloth was basically a symbol of Buganda's identity. If a Muganda alienated him or herself from bark cloth, that would raise some doubts about their true identity as Baganda. Pat was also hopeful that the uses of bark cloth would increase or expand with UNESCO's recognition and, as a result, bark cloth would become part of people's everyday life as in the past. With time, some of the processes involved in its production would be improved and more people would get involved with it at various levels across its life course. But all in all, it had to come from the Baganda which would make it more meaningful to them.

Pat described some bark cloth exhibitions she had attended that showcased already made bark cloth. She was not impressed by the superficiality of such exhibitions, because she believed that the process of making bark cloth was a very unique one which needed to be captured and yet was never captured during such exhibitions. The entire process of bark cloth making and the tools used to make the bark cloth were very interesting and were evidence of how rich Uganda's indigenous knowledge was, but were never captured during these exhibitions. It would also be imperative to emphasize that over time bark cloth making ceased to be just a clan role and became a more widespread art. With the banning of the kingdoms, people were able to learn other clan roles like bark cloth making which was carried out mainly by the Ngonge people in Buganda. Pat was

therefore impressed that despite the abolition of the kingdoms, some people had managed to ensure continuity of their cultural duties, especially since a lot of information had been lost during the political unrest period prior to 1986. People's attitudes towards bark cloth were also starting to change by the time I met Pat because, according to her, in the past people associated bark cloth with witchcraft. However, she noted that people's views were changing and they understood people who wore bark cloth as closely linked to their cultural traditions and wearing bark cloth was starting to be considered fashionable.

Pat also felt that exhibiting the bark cloth making process would be a way of showing that people can survive with indigenous knowledge even at a time when everyone seemed to be advocating for modernity. Unfortunately, people seemed to be abandoning their cultural traditions and adopting foreign ways of life that were being exposed by the media. Those foreign ways were widely believed to be more modern than the traditional way of life. However, Pat believed that even the bark cloth making process must have evolved over time, and was therefore optimistic that the process could be assimilated into the modern way of life, and improved upon to match the changing times. She believed that it was possible for bark cloth to be produced at a more sophisticated level, but the decision to change had to come from the indigenous people and not from outsiders, otherwise the change would be rejected by the natives. Incorporating bark cloth into the modern way of life would also give the bark cloth more value, which would mean that the demand for it would rise. The high demand would require an increase in quantity of the bark cloth and therefore improvement in the method of production which would also mean improvement in quality. That way, the traditional aspect of bark cloth

would not be lost because the change would be initiated by the Baganda for whom the bark cloth had cultural meaning.

When I asked Pat about the significance of the bark cloth artifacts, she expressed disappointment at how culture was being pawned as tourism since people were not seeing any usefulness in it except selling cultural objects like bark cloth to tourists. She was convinced that bark cloth artifacts were made specifically to target tourists. People were able to identify an aspect of their culture that was unique and turned it into an economic resource by earning from it. However they did not look beyond the economic aspect of it. She felt that the lack of domestic attraction to bark cloth and its artifacts was attributed to the stigma attached to bark cloth. People still associated bark cloth with death, but, since some fashion leaders were showing interest in bark cloth, Pat was hopeful that bark cloth would slowly become stylish. She mentioned how having something African as part of one's dress, for example, cowhide sandals, cow-horn earrings and so on, was beginning to be considered stylish. The more these African accessories were advertised or showcased during fashion shows, the more popular they became. She was confident that the gradual change in attitude could be interpreted as a cultural change that would, with time, improve people's attitudes towards bark cloth. Improved attitudes would also mean increased extensive use of bark cloth and thus reduced stigma, which would also give the bark cloth more cultural value.

On the issue of what she felt about the future of bark cloth, Pat said that increased use of bark cloth would mean extended use of it to other parts outside Buganda, increased planting of trees and therefore increased green cover which would benefit the environment. She also believed that the increased interest in bark cloth following the

UNESCO declaration was going to raise questions of sustainability since many people used firewood for cooking. As Pat thought passionately about the future of bark cloth, she expressed the desire to wear it to work at some point. She was, however, concerned about its maintenance but was sure that a solution would be found regarding improving some of the properties of bark cloth like launderability. She was sure that finding a solution would take time but, for it to be effective, it had to come from the Baganda themselves. As we concluded our conversation, I had a sense that Pat's position as a cultural officer had provided her with a lot of information regarding material culture and that information had enabled her process her own outlook towards material culture. She was able to appreciate it and read the signs of cultural change within society and predict some of the future happenings. I bade her farewell with the promise of contacting her again if I had any further questions.

4.12 Tying the accounts together

The above narrative accounts were actually my recollections of the conversations I had with my participants with the help of the recorded conversations, the transcripts, the field journal, pictures and videos from the field. They are descriptions of how I met my participants, how the conversations transpired and analysis of what my participants said or did during our interaction. The conversations took place within the three dimensional narrative inquiry space, with time, space and the personal and social in interplay (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50). As the participants described their experiences, they metaphorically travelled back and forth in time and to a variety of places. They also recalled various people they interacted with during that time and expressed their feelings

regarding their experiences with bark cloth. By so doing, they were able to reveal the intangible information related to bark cloth, and through their stories, they attached more intangible value to it.

Chapter Five: Analysis

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present an analysis of participants' life experiences with bark cloth, a key element of Buganda's material culture, as an illustration that material culture possesses both tangible and intangible aspects. I also demonstrate that individuals embody intangible knowledge by reliving and retelling their stories of experience with material objects. I begin by reviewing the definition of heritage as advanced by UNESCO and various researchers. I then draw excerpts from my participants' stories of experiences with bark cloth, to illustrate how material culture as heritage possesses both intangible and tangible aspects and therefore cannot be classified under either one. I present the stories of experience under three subheadings namely: time/temporality, place/space and personal/social relationships. These three make up the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, in which retelling of lived experiences often takes place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I demonstrate that by recalling various moments in time, and the places where my participants interacted with bark cloth, and with whom these experiences occurred, enabled my participants to realize the invaluable information regarding bark cloth, gained during those events. This they achieved by the constant shifting back and forth through memory, recalling where, when and with whom these experiences occurred.

5.2 Defining heritage

As already explained in Chapter three, UNESCO defines heritage as "our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations" (http://whc.unesco.org/en/about, 2007). It further categorizes heritage as tangible and

intangible with material culture under the tangible category. Tangible heritage according to UNESCO involves both natural and cultural heritage. Natural heritage refers to: naturally existing physical, biological, geological and physiological features or parts of it and, or including natural environmental sites that support nature (http://www.unesco.org/culture, 2006). Natural heritage has both specific spatial and temporal dimensions and therefore is dynamic. Cultural heritage according to UNESCO refers to:

> monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
>
> groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
>
> sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf 2001).

UNESCO further defines intangible heritage as,

- Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; ,
- Performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre);

- Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- Traditional craftsmanship.

These are in addition to "the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (http://www.unesco.org/culture/2006).

According to UNESCO, tangible heritage is physical and can be safe guarded, whereas intangible heritage is constantly being recreated and therefore relies on those who possess it to pass it down to the next generations, mainly through oral tradition. As such, intangible heritage is presented as being vulnerable and can be easily lost. In this study, however, I seek to demonstrate that intangible heritage without tangible heritage is meaningless, and safeguarding one without the other may lead to a double loss. For example many of the rituals, practices and performances classified by UNESCO under intangible cultural heritage, involve material objects like drums, regalia, etc. Therefore safeguarding the practices without linking then directly to the objects involved may not achieve the intended objectives.

In this study, for instance, in Buganda, bark cloth making requires knowledge of the traditional craft, a skill and knowledge held by some individuals. It also involves the natural heritage, which include the trees, and other tangible objects like the mallets (which are also skillfully crafted by specific people), the *omukomago* etc. Safeguarding the craft of bark cloth making is actually also safeguarding the tangible objects involved. Additionally, the people who possess the related skills are also tangible elements in the

entire process. Furthermore, bark cloth is used to skillfully craft other artifacts and it is used in various rituals like initiation of twins, where it exists as a tangible expression of culture. Thus the tangible cannot be easily separated from the intangible.

Through the 2004 *Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Heritage,* UNESCO acknowledged the existence of an interrelationship between the tangible and intangible heritage. It also addressed the need to recognize cultural heritage as composed of both tangible and intangible elements (http://portal.unesco.org/culture/, 2006). However, the 2005 proclamation of bark cloth making in Uganda as one of the world's masterpieces of oral and intangible heritage is a clear example of how tangible and intangible elements cannot be ignored. Bark cloth is tangible and the skills and knowledge as well as the meanings about it are intangible. UNESCO, however, presents two independent definitions of tangible and intangible heritage and does not emphasize the interrelatedness between the two.

As already illustrated in Chapter three, some writers have also expressed concern about the confusion surrounding UNESCO's definitions of tangible and intangible heritage (Moreno et al., 2005), and have called for a clearer integration of the definitions. Tangible forms of heritage are laden with intangible wealth and therefore this needs to be made very explicit. My study of bark cloth, a key element of material culture in Buganda-Central Uganda, contributes to this ongoing discussion about the need to be very explicit about the interrelationship between tangible and intangible heritage. I draw from my participants' experiences with bark cloth to illustrate how tangible culture is laden with intangible information and the fact that both the tangible and intangible information need

to be addressed together, especially when dealing with material cultural heritage. However, before I proceed with an analysis of peoples' experiences with bark cloth in Buganda, I will briefly review what other writers have advanced regarding certain forms of heritage that possess both tangible and intangible elements. I will also juxtapose these views with some of my participants' reactions to the UNESCO recognition of bark cloth and how this relates to the interrelationship of tangible and intangible aspects of bark cloth.

5.3 Reactions to UNESCO's taxonomy of heritage and the 2003 recognition of bark cloth making in Uganda

Kirshenblatt-Gimblet (2004) points out that intangible heritage epitomizes both people's material and social environments and therefore cannot be separated from the tangible (p. 60). Considering some of the forms of intangible cultural heritage referred to by UNESCO, performing arts, for instance, require regalia, drums, songs and specific movements all of which are put together to convey a message. Without one, the message would be incomplete. This can also be perceived from some of the participants in this study, for example, the bark cloth maker and the bark cloth-artifact maker. The people cannot be separated from the skills they possess and these skills can only be recognized when they are transformed into material things, in form of bark cloth or bark cloth artifacts.

Kurin (2004) also notes that separating the tangible from the intangible disconnects the two rendering them meaningless. He further explains that material objects are created with knowledge and skills that are intangible thus, these cannot be separated

from the object they helped to create (p. 70). So, when Alan, the cultural minister, proposed in reaction to UNESCO's recognition of bark cloth that,

> We intend to make sure that people plant the mituba trees especially in areas where bark cloth making was extensive...where the best bark cloth comes from...we would also like to designate space where bark cloth making activities can be carried out, to show the process of making bark cloth, the mallets used to beat the bark cloth, the anvil, the building in which bark cloth is made ...a typical village where the process is carried out...

This shows that when one mentions the craft of bark cloth making, there are a lot of tangible and intangible elements that are involved. The trees, mallets, anvils and the building all go hand in hand with the intangible craft and traditional meaning that bark cloth, which is tangible in itself, has for the people.

Arizpe (2004), on the other hand, argues that for people to protect their cultural ancestry, they need to preserve their intangible cultural heritage at the same time as they accept what they find meaningful from other cultures. But elsewhere, she also admits that cultural meaning is lost when visible forms of cultural actions lose their meaning (p. 133). These two statements confirm that preserving the tangible heritage without the intangible aspects of it may mean loss of cultural information. Like Irene the bark cloth seller said,

> The problem with us...is that we go with what the white man brings to us and then we forget that we have our own heritage that we are abandoning...because when they come here and bring their stuff, we just copy...we do all this unaware that we are abandoning our traditions.

From Irene's and Arizpe's statements, what is most important is to remain aware of one's heritage even as one encounters other cultures. However, for this to effectively happen, there is need to have some attachment to both tangible and intangible forms of our material culture. Having attachment to only one of them makes it superficial and thus

losing it becomes easy. As such the intangible cultural heritage alone cannot be preserved if it has no tangible reference and the relevant knowledge and skills may not be adequately passed on to the subsequent generations. Likewise, the physical or tangible heritage without its accompanying intangible knowledge will lose the cultural wealth it possesses, and thus may cease to be part of the people's lives or the uses will change altogether, leading to loss of cultural information.

In order to prevent this loss of cultural knowledge there is a need to be more explicit about cultural heritage that clearly possesses both intangible and tangible attributes. Moreno et al. (2005) advances the concept of material cultural heritage within which I choose to frame my work. He describes material cultural heritage as that "in which the intangible essence cannot be disentangled from the tangible essence" (p. 4). He also points out that the tangible and intangible elements inherent in material culture are usually linked to a specific group of people. Additionally, material objects are created by a community to meet its lifestyle and can therefore be produced and exchanged, but at the same time they possess the cultural information that the bearers pass down to the subsequent generations with reference to the tangible. I therefore consider bark cloth in this study as possessing both tangible and intangible elements and their interrelationship cannot be easily disregarded.

If people are to safeguard the tangible heritage, they also need to be aware of the intangible aspects related to the tangible ones so that protecting one means protecting the other. This study therefore makes explicit the interdependence between tangible and intangible aspects of material culture as part of heritage, by exploring various individuals' life course experiences with bark cloth in Buganda. I draw from bark cloth

which in the past was used in both the daily and physical life of the people for both utilitarian and cultural purposes. Today, bark cloth has extended to include more economic uses as a commodity, and is being made into artifacts, paintings, fashionable wear etc., which are sold as a source of income. I consider the knowledge and skills that the various individuals use during their involvement with bark cloth as a means of informing the field of heritage from a material culture perspective.

5.4 Locating the inquiry within a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative space

This study was conducted in Buganda, Central Uganda, where bark cloth, a significant component of Buganda's material culture, was extensively used in the daily and spiritual lives of the people, before the introduction of foreign textiles. With the flooding of foreign textiles on the market, the use of bark cloth in the daily lives of the people is very minimal but continues to be used on a gradually decreasing scale during cultural rituals and celebrations, such as burials, particularly in the rural areas. However in the urban areas, traditional bark cloth is being incorporated into more contemporary activities such as art and crafts which include paintings on bark cloth, making of bark cloth artifacts, printed designs on large pieces of bark cloth, fashionable wear amongst others. Bark cloth is also used in traditional music, dance and drama presentations by various performing artistes. For this inquiry however, in order to obtain and synthesize my participants' stories of experience with bark cloth, I used a narrative inquiry approach to consult with various individuals from both urban and rural areas who were in one way or another involved with bark cloth over their life course.

As discussed earlier in chapter three, narrative inquiry focuses on human experience with narratives at the center of the inquiry both as phenomena under study and

methodology for studying the phenomena (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) further define experience as "a changing stream that is characterized by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment" (p. 39). Experience can span either the entire life of an individual (lived time) or just part of it (Kerby, 1991, pp. 16-17). People's lived experiences can be explored according to temporality, place and personal/social relations, because telling stories of experience happens by recalling past incidents in relation to the present. This means moving back and forth in memory. The retold experiences are contextualized depending on where and when they took place and with whom, all the while evoking feelings that help to reshape the present. I chose to present my analysis by drawing from my participants' stories of experience with bark cloth within those three dimensions of narrative inquiry: time/temporality, place/space and personal/social. These three make up the three dimensional narrative space within which narrative inquiry takes place. While I recognize that these three dimensions overlap, I have chosen to use them as threads for my discussion to enable me articulate my participants' individual and collective experiences with bark cloth over time and place.

Time, according to Corfield (2006), refers to a continuously unfolding period and, like experience, time can be a whole or part of a whole (p. xv). Clandinin & Connelly (2000) expound on this continuous unfolding by noting that experiences emanate from other experiences and these in turn yield other experiences (p. 2). As such a person at any one time experiences a past, a present or a possible future. For an experience to be meaningful to an individual, then the lived time has to also be significant, that way the experience is retained in the memory and can be recollected when required. My

participants, for instance, recalled and told those bark cloth-related experiences that they found significant. Carr (2004) argues that for one to experience time, they have to become a part of time-controlled events that are significant to the person (pp. 5-6). Those events become a part of the past and make up the background of the horizon and influence the future. Culture is dynamic and so is heritage. Bark cloth as part of my participants' dynamic heritage was experienced differently at varying points in their lives, and with various people depending on the contexts. As they recalled those salient lived experiences with bark cloth, they realized how meaningful those experiences were in the past and how they influenced the present, and how these experiences could influence the future. Those recollected experiences spelt out the intangible value of bark cloth for the participants and, as such, gave the bark cloth more meaning for them.

In this study, bark cloth was part of the lived space that the participants experienced at different times in their lives as individuals, and as part of a wider society. Hoskins (1998) notes how objects can be used to tell one's lived stories and, in the process, they become mediators of temporal, spatial and personal relationships by locating the individual in a particular time and place (p. 8). In this study, bark cloth became the medium through which participants' experiences were lived and told. From their lived and told temporal, spatial and social stories, I draw out those threads of experience that draw out the interrelationships between intangible and tangible aspects of bark cloth as material culture. I use these threads of experience to construct a framework for understanding how material objects possess both intangible and tangible characteristics that influence people's experiences with the material objects. I should mention that I am aware that overlapping aspects of temporality, place and

personal/social interactions are coexistent within people's narratives, but I have chosen to deal with them separately to bring out how each played a role in enhancing the participants' experiences with the tangible-intangible elements of bark cloth.

5.4.1 Time

Time or temporality played a significant role in understanding my participants' narrative experiences with bark cloth because the meaning and interpretation of life stories becomes more possible when events are recounted over time (De Fina, 2003, p. 370). Recounting events in the present, required the participants to continually travel back to their remembered past and into the anticipated future in order to make sense of their present experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50; Kerby, 1991, p. 18). Time was also important in conceptualizing tangible-intangible interrelationships because material meanings change from the time objects are created, through use, to the time that the object is either too old to be functional, or the people do not have any meaning for it. Thus intangible information tends to shift or change as the tangible object ages or its function changes for the users and understanding time/temporality enables us to attend to these changes.

In order to attend to temporal shifts in tangible-intangible interrelationships regarding material objects, people's stories of lived experiences with these objects need to be accessed. In this particular inquiry, participants' lived experiences with bark cloth were sought. As they recollected and told their stories, the participants revealed how their relationships with bark cloth shifted along the continuum of their lives and the shifting continued as they told their stories, and by so doing, they created new stories for the future. Telling their lived stories of experience with bark cloth enabled the participants to

relive what happened during the past in order to make sense of their present experiences with bark cloth and to predict what would happen in the future. By so doing, the participants were able to realize the invaluable information that they obtained through their interaction with bark cloth. Their stories revealed that bark cloth was laden with intangible information, and this relationship came out at a particular time or over a certain period of time. In this case, time helped to bring out the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible elements of bark cloth through the participants' stories of experience with bark cloth.

Although the bark cloth remained a constant over the course of the participants' lives, the related knowledge and skills changed as they grew up, and many of these changes were realized as they shared their stories. Thereafter, some of them also predicted future changes in the way bark cloth would be perceived by others, as related knowledge and skills changed. Thus there is a need to be aware of the shifts in the intangible wealth of material objects over time and the need to integrate both tangible and intangible elements when transmitting cultural knowledge.

Here I present the participants' stories of experience with bark cloth as they interacted with it during their childhood and how this influenced their adult relationships with their own children. I also make reference to intergenerational cultural transmission which entails children learning from adults by imitation or by being taught by adults (Schönpflug, 2001, p. 174) as a concept of time. This is because some of the experiences described by the participants, revealed interactions with people from different generations experiencing bark cloth at the same time, but differently. The participants' told stories of how they encountered bark cloth either by being taught about it by their parents or by

observing how it was being used and their perceptions kept shifting as they continued to experience bark cloth at different times in their lives as they grew up. It suffices to note that these experiences are intangible and are directly linked to bark cloth which is tangible.

5.4.1a Personal memories

Alan, the cultural minister, for instance, recalled being involved in bark cloth making as early as six years old.

> I was involved in bark cloth making at one time...I participated in bark cloth making as early as 6, 7, 8 years before I left home. I actually got skilled in bark cloth making. I participated in stripping the bark with my father then we proceeded to beat the bark and I know the entire process perfectly. Now I see that going through any experience especially such an experience is good... Anyone who did not experience this cannot understand, so I think it was good for me to experience that.

Alan's recollection of his early childhood bark cloth making experience is a clear demonstration of how travelling back in time makes things clearer when one is recollecting the lived experience. Going back to that experience was like reassessing the experience and enabled him to draw out the intangible wealth attached to bark cloth in the form of skills and experience. Such an experience shows how the tangible bark cloth cannot be separated from the intangible knowledge and skills associated with it. Alan's story also shows us that for cultural information about bark cloth to be successfully transmitted to the subsequent generations, the intangible knowledge and skills have to be presented together with the bark cloth. Failure to present the two concurrently may result in failure to transmit the cultural knowledge (Schönpflug, 2001, p. 174). A cultural object without the relevant knowledge does not contribute to the progress of that culture, just

like information about the object is irrelevant without the object (Prott & O'Keefe, p. 308). For instance, if one is teaching bark cloth making, they have to have the bark on which to demonstrate the skills and knowledge involved in the process.

Later on as an adult, Alan felt the need to also pass on the cultural knowledge and skills that he had obtained as a child. Engaging in the traditional craft of bark cloth making at an early age, inspired Alan to write a book on education for the common man entitled *Critical Issues in African Education (1970).* In that book he used bark cloth and the craft of bark cloth making as an example for comparing people who were unemployed school dropouts with no skills to those who had received education for the common man and were already involved in skilled activities like bark cloth making. He also addressed the need for a scientific explanation of the entire process of bark cloth making, from the stripping, beating, covering the stripped tree etc. Having some kind of explanation would for him, ease the process of passing on the intangible knowledge and skills involved in bark cloth making. He said

> ...actually I wrote about this...when I referred to education for the common man...I was stressing issues that I felt were important and needed urgent attention...there is a particular section where I mention bark cloth and how I saw a future for it. I was thinking about the unemployed and the secondary school dropouts who loiter on the streets with no skills. When you compare them to one who has education for common man and is already making bark cloth...(pauses), I wanted to show that it requires scientific knowledge to understand how the bark is stripped from the tree, actually right from when the tree is planted to when the first piece is stripped off, knowing the science that is involved in folding the inner bark that is being removed and finding out how long it should be folded before it is beaten up, knowing how the cow dung that is smeared on the weak areas works its miracle of healing the bark, knowing the appropriate time to remove the leaves protecting the new bark...it's just like horticulture...just like growing a tulip. You can not say that this one is more scientific. But it has taken 35 years...

For Alan, the time that common man's knowledge was acquired, was very important. Seeing young people with no traditional skills dropping out of school as he grew up made

him realize the importance of early teaching of traditional skills as a solution to this problem. He saw bark cloth making as one of the solutions because material objects are physically created within a culture and contain both social and cultural information about the way of life of a people (Dant, 1999, p. 1). These people would be gaining both practical skills as well as intangible cultural information. Writing the book became, for Alan, a way of making the intangible tangible, by availing cultural information about bark cloth making to subsequent generations. The book became a link between the tangible and intangible. But it was because of the temporal experiences that Alan had experienced that he was able to write this book.

Alan was also able to use his past experiences with bark cloth to make suggestions for the future, following the 2005 UNESCO inclusion of bark cloth making in Uganda on the intangible cultural heritage list.

> ...we intend to make sure that people plant the *mituba* trees especially in areas where bark cloth making has been extensive for instance in Kooki and Buddu where the best bark cloth comes from. We would like them to replant the *mituba* trees also known as "*egilama*" (survivor trees). There are those that do not easily survive. There are those that survive the multiple stripping and yield very good quality bark cloth, and they usually grow straight...they are not bent. The ones that are not straight are not easily stripped...we would also like to designate space where bark cloth making can be carried out exclusively...to show the process of making bark cloth, the mallets used to beat the bark, the anvil and the structure (building) in which bark cloth is made. We are considering putting up a typical village where the process is carried out. We also have the option of partitioning Kasubi tombs area because it is so big and use the space to demonstrate the traditional activities that were carried out in the past.

Alan exhibited loyalty to his heritage particularly regarding bark cloth, which could be attributed to his awareness of the intangible wealth in bark cloth, which he felt needed to be passed on to the future generations (Condominas, 2004, p. 22). His future plans were aimed at integrating the tangible aspects of bark cloth and related intangible knowledge and skills, because in many indigenous communities, the natural, tangible and intangible

heritage is inseparable (Aikawa, 2004, p. 141; van Zanten, 2004, p. 39,). Setting up demonstration sites was a way of capturing both the intangible and tangible aspects of bark cloth as a way of saving them and passing them on (Condominas, 2004, p. 23). As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) points out, "tangible heritage, without intangible heritage is a mere husk or inert matter" (p. 60).

For Charles (the artist) and Margaret (one of the Kings' wives), their childhood memories of bark cloth did not involve physical involvement in making of the bark cloth or bark cloth products. Their experiences involved using bark cloth as beddings and their experiences were interestingly similar. Charles' recollection of bark cloth was quite unpleasant.

> I remember when I was a small kid we used to sleep in bark cloth... our beddings. At that stage we used to fear, we saw the dead being wrapped like many people today here fear it...

Mary's experience was similar to Charles'.

> I grew up amongst bark cloth makers and I used to use bark cloth as beddings but finding the dead being wrapped in bark cloth *(shudders)* I would have really bad nights...

These two experiences occurred in different settings but their reaction towards bark cloth was the same. The intangible information about bark cloth that they obtained as children was negative. As a result they developed a negative attitude towards bark cloth. In intergenerational transmission of material cultural heritage, cultural information may be obtained through observation of how others interact with particular material culture. What is observed will therefore take root in the observer and influence their relationship with the material culture. If the observation experience is negative, then the observer may refrain from interacting with that particular material object and thus will be unable to obtain sufficient intangible information about it. Hence, as an adult, although Margaret

was engaged in other activities involving bark cloth, she still felt uncomfortable using bark cloth as bedding because she associated it with death, but the other activities did not have negative memories and that is why she continued with them...

> ...until now, I am an old woman but I dislike bark cloth...covering myself like this? I do not want that!

The above stories of experience inform us that early exposure to bark cloth and its related information like those who were taught how to make bark cloth or bark cloth artifacts had a chance to obtain hands-on intangible knowledge which concretized their perception of bark cloth as an important part of their material culture. For those who just observed how bark cloth was being used, seeing it used for wrapping the dead, instilled negative perceptions of bark cloth. This confirms that as material objects change contexts over time, then the responses to them also change (Dant, 1999, p. 2). We should, therefore, be aware of what is being transmitted during the process of passing on material cultural heritage. The material object possesses both tangible and intangible information, both of which have to be transmitted since the intangible helps to describe and communicate the tangible (Munjeri, 2004, p. 14 & 18).

Andrew, Buganda's chief bark cloth maker, described a similar childhood to Alan's.

> From earlier years, my father was the chief bark cloth maker *(omukomazi)*, he was the chief *musumisi* (the one who made the bark cloth regalia worn during the coronation of the newly crowned Kings). It was recently that I became his heir and because it is a lineage duty, I also took it up... When he (the father) was making bark cloth, he always made sure that we also learnt how to do it... in fact almost all my elders know how to make bark cloth. He taught us how to strip the trees right from when we remove the outer bark to ensure that the inner bark came off easily. He taught us about the *omukomago* (factory) because that one was at home, the mallets which he used to buy or some people would make him some out of kindness typical of Baganda. We all learnt how to make bark cloth (*okukomaga*) because it is our family role, it is hereditary...

When Andrew recollected his early childhood experiences, he revealed clearly that passing on intangible cultural information regarding bark cloth as material culture, entailed transmitting knowledge and skills required in the bark cloth making process, and additional information about the bark cloth making trees, *omukomago* and the tools needed. An important aspect that Andrew also reveals is the concept of intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. His story revealed how people from various generations existed at the same time and experienced bark cloth together but in different ways.

5.4.1b Intergenerational tensions

Aikawa (2004) advances the concept of intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, as one of the recommendations for renovating the 2003 UNESCO convention, in addition to recognizing the interactional role between the intangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural and natural heritage among others (p. 146). Transmission of cultural information was recognized by the 2003 convention as one of the major means of safe guarding intangible heritage (Zanten, 2004, p. 41), and tangible heritage especially through intergenerational transmission which is important in ensuring cultural continuity (Nauck, 2001, p. 159).

Intergenerational transmission of material cultural heritage does not necessarily mean that the younger generation will readily embrace the entire cultural heritage transmitted by the older generation. Transmission of cultural information is contextual and therefore only what is relevant at that time tends to be passed on to the younger generations (Nauck, 2001; Schönpflug, 2001). Penny's story as a bark cloth artifact

maker informs us further about how she experienced this concept, particularly her childhood experiences of learning to make bark cloth artifacts…

> When I grew up, my aunt *(motions to an older lady seated not far from where she was)* taught us… I also first abandoned this work and went into fish mongering, but after sometime my aunt told me that fish gives one an offensive odor. She asked me why I did not want to continue with making bark cloth artifacts for survival. Later on I followed her advice and did what she wanted. You know elders are tricky, when they say something it usually comes true.

For Penny, getting involved with bark cloth without any related cultural knowledge created tension between her and her aunt. Their perceptions of the bark cloth were different because her aunt had some cultural knowledge about bark cloth that Penny didn't. Sometimes material cultural objects lose their intangible cultural meanings and become just like any other commodity (Arizpe, 2004), especially if they have no meaning for the people around them. Even as a child when Penny went to visit her grandmother, she was shocked when she saw bark cloth being used as bedding.

> ...how could one sleep on dead people's shrouds? Then I realized that people were using them as beddings and they said it kept them warmer than a blanket.

When she grew up and was asked by her aunt to make artifacts from bark cloth, she opted to become a fish monger, because she did not attach any meaning to bark cloth. But for such individuals who lack cultural knowledge, cultural persistence could be used to ensure that cultural knowledge is transmitted quickly and intensively to ensure its retention (Schönpflug, 2001). Penny's aunt realized that Penny lacked cultural information related to bark cloth so, she provided her with the knowledge about bark cloth and with time Penny was drawn back to bark cloth making. As Penny shared her story, she was confidently sharing her shifted attitudes about bark cloth.

> This bark cloth is ours. It has been around for so long, I cannot be ashamed of it, because it is Buganda's identity...we would also like it to be known worldwide that this is Buganda's

> cloth, its identity which existed from the past...one has to have some kind of cultural identity... by having something like bark cloth from your forefathers. These things should not be abandoned, that is why we have so many diseases killing us off.

Penny was able to arrive at such comments after being involved with bark cloth over the years and connecting it with the cultural knowledge that she learned from her aunt. As she talked about her experiences with bark cloth over time, she was able to assess its cultural importance and linking the two helped to keep her involved with bark cloth even when she had other options. Penny's experience is a clear example of how lack of intangible information even when the physical object is present may hold no meaning for a person. But when the two are combined, over time, one is able to recognize the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible. Penny's comment on how diseases are "killing us off" is a clear indicator of how she was able to make this connection over time.

Sometimes passing on cultural information may not readily be received by the younger generations. A material object may mean one thing to one person and another thing to another (Kopytoff, 1986, p. 64). As a child, Andrew (the bark cloth maker)had readily learned how to make bark cloth from his father. He had also learned all the knowledge and skills required for him to take up the role of official bark cloth maker in Buganda. Several years later, Andrew wanted to pass what he had learned from his father on to his children with the hope that one of them would succeed him and take up his role. He, however, encountered intergenerational challenges because it appeared that his children's perception of traditional knowledge regarding bark cloth was different from his.

> The children (pauses)... we do not understand them (pauses) when they go to the city they get stuck there ... I have tried but they have refused to learn because most of them are still

> in school...those who have learnt are few...they are about two of them. They appear to be interested... however what stops them from getting so involved is that here in our area, it is not lucrative. They prefer to get involved with higher paying jobs. Here when we make bark cloth, we can keep it for so long without getting buyers...so the children do not see any value in it.

The challenges Andrew was faced with when it came to teaching his own children about bark cloth are evidence that culture is not static and individuals adjust to any cultural changes (Dant, 1999). What was salient for Charles as he grew up was different from that of his children. They had become so much unaware of the bark cloth that it became unimportant to them as they focused on survival. This meant that getting an education and finding a well paying job was more important to the children than involving themselves with bark cloth which, to them, was unprofitable. They had probably been provided with the cultural information about bark cloth but were unaware of how they could use bark cloth as an economic resource. This experience informs us that material cultural information should be appropriated to the existing conditions and cultural contexts (Miller, 1999, p. 47; Schönpflug, 2001).

However, Penny (the bark cloth-artifact maker) too, had challenges getting her children involved in making bark cloth artefacts…

> In the beginning they were scared of me saying, I would rather continue fish mongering but this bark cloth will make people think we are witches. They said people will think we exhumed dead people and used the cloth, because it is used to wrap the dead. So they may think we exhumed the dead, used the cloth and there is a possibility that we eat the dead! Don't you see that? So, I encouraged them that this would be our source of income. Later they noticed that we were getting some money from it, so when their friends asked them what it was they told them that it is bark cloth from which our mother earns money.

Clearly Penny, like Alan and Andrew, were so attached to their heritage and felt responsible for passing on cultural information to the future generations (Condominas, 2004, p. 22). This entailed teaching their children about bark cloth and related knowledge

and skills. However there seemed to be some assumption that the young people would embrace bark cloth the way Penny, Alan, Andrew and their peers had embraced it. Although it is apparent that material objects are created within a cultural and social structure, their form and meaning change with changes in society. As generations come and go, the people's responses to material objects also change (Dant, 1999, p. 13). Penny and Andrew's children valued bark cloth differently from their parents and so the intangible cultural knowledge they ascribed to bark cloth was different from that of their parents.

Margaret, who even in her adulthood would not use bark cloth as bedding because of her childhood memories of associating it with death, did not blame the young generation for shunning bark cloth.

> No no no eehh!! They do not like it at all. They can even throw it out. If you dare cover them with it even when they are sick, they think you want them dead. Bark cloth is for the dead... But even me here, much as I used bark cloth as beddings in the past, but I do not like to use it as bedding. To cover myself like this? (*Motions as if to pull covers over one's body*). Another thing is, I grew up amongst bark cloth makers and I used to use bark cloth as beddings but finding the dead being wrapped in bark cloth *(shudders)* I would have really bad nights... I would think about the bark cloth and up until now, I am an old woman but I dislike bark cloth...covering myself like this? I do not want that!... I do not blame them.

Margaret felt that she was in no position to judge the younger generations for shunning bark cloth as bedding because they too probably had had the same experiences as she had. On the contrary, Margaret appreciated bark cloth as part of Buganda's heritage and did not mind using it for other traditional purposes. However, she sympathized with the sick children because letting them cover themselves with bark cloth was like giving them up for dead. She also agreed that society and culture are dynamic and so she did not see why the young people had to hold onto traditional culture. She simply summed up the bark cloth issue in the following words.

That trend is gone.

So, as the participants travelled back and forth into their childhood, back to the present and as they also contemplated the future, they were able to realize that culture is not static and therefore material culture is also dynamic. The intangible cultural information related to bark cloth varied according to the age of the person experiencing it, and each participant experienced shifts in their own perception of bark cloth during the course of their lives. These shifts occurred because material objects exist in different contexts which are influenced by time as one of the factors. The contexts within which these meanings are derived range from creation, consumption, and/or communication contexts (Miller, 1999, pp. 58-59). Some of the participants experienced bark cloth in the making process, others as a finished product, as shrouds for the dead, in the making of art and crafts and so on. But from childhood to adulthood, the contexts kept on changing and, so did the participants' perception of bark cloth. As individuals locate themselves in any of these contexts depending on the point in time during their life, the intangible cultural information ascribed to a material object also shifts. Aside from the time during which the participants were involved with bark cloth, the spatial context where the experiences occurred also helped to assign intangible meaning to the bark cloth and to the experience.

5.4.2 Place

5.4.2a Space as place

The milieu in which an experience with an object takes place also helps in expounding on the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible characteristics of

material objects like bark cloth. "Like time, experiences are contextual and exist in multiple forms" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 45). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) further highlight some of these contexts as spatial, cultural, social, institutional, place, and people contexts. At any one time a combination of these contexts may be present during a narrative process. Place is important in making sense of people's lived experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to place as "the specific, concrete and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (p. 51). As the participant is located in a specific place at the time they tell their story, they also travel back and forth mentally through physical places that they occupied at a certain point in their lives. I expand this notion of place to include the spaces occupied by bark cloth which in turn influenced the intangible information assigned to it. This transformed the space into significant places for participants. The spatial context as such, may take both tangible and intangible forms.

Mary, for instance, described having bark cloth on her bed.

> ...even now we still use them on the bed; I personally cover myself with it... because I find it warmer than a blanket.

Aside from the cultural significance of bark cloth, Mary discovered a utilitarian property of bark cloth based on its materiality, which enabled her to have part of her heritage close to her. Such experiences define the social contexts within which bark cloth is incorporated into the daily lives of people (Dant, 1999, p. 4). Mary's experience shows the versatility of bark cloth as both a cultural and social object without losing one or the other. Like Mary, Andrew the bark cloth maker also admitted using it on his bed.

> ...I even have it on my bed. It is there. Because I know the value of bark cloth but others do not see any value in it especially today. It is very warm and if you fall sick or when you die, the person who is close by, maybe a wife or any man finds it easier to cover the dead person. Bark cloth should always be the first thing next to the body...Bark cloth should always be the first. These other fabrics can come later just for aesthetic purposes...

Although aware of the cultural significance of bark cloth and the gradually diminishing cultural interest in bark cloth, Andrew chose to focus on the practical aspects of bark cloth. In addition, having bark cloth on the bed, especially as an elderly person, was one's way of preparing himself for when the time to join one's ancestors at death comes. Having it on the bed, for use at death, would communicate to the people around, that the dead wished to be wrapped in bark cloth as a way of ensuring that the dead connects with his ancestors (Schneider, 2006, pp.204-205). The bed was transformed into a significant cultural space when adorned with bark cloth, as a space where one crosses over from the living to the dead. Thus finding bark cloth on the bed communicated intangible meaning to those around and bark cloth, therefore, could not be separated from its cultural significance as bedding.

For Raymond, experiencing bark cloth during a traditional medicine man's healing ritual was also another illustration of how place/space enhanced the tangible-intangible interrelationship of bark cloth. Raymond recalled accompanying a foreign researcher to a traditional medicine man's shrine, where he saw how the presence of bark cloth transformed a space into a special place.

> We went to one of the medicine men and he demonstrated how he treats his patients. A chicken was cut and placed on bark cloth...everything was real, nothing was staged. I noticed that that is how he treats his patients, I saw him lay bark cloth on the floor, they sat on it, cut the chicken and bled it and so on... He gave the patient medicine and the patient gave him money, in fact it is on this bark cloth that the medicine man pours the traditional money (cowry shells). He pours them "whaaarrr!" so he can call upon the spirits to come and start treating his patient.

During this ritual bark cloth was used to adorn and demarcate the physical space and transform it into a sacred spiritual space for the ritual to take place (Schneider, 2006,

p. 204). Bark cloth was believed to connect the human world and the spiritual world, making it possible for the divine spirits to locate the place where it was required and those who needed it. From this story, the intangible significance of bark cloth could not be separated from its tangibility because the presence of bark cloth was directly linked to the ritual taking place. Without the bark cloth, the ritual would probably be considered unauthentic and robbed of its cultural significance.

The physical places where bark cloth was used, according to my participants' experiences, were not just for divine intervention. In Kasubi tombs, the main hut *Muzibu Azaala Mpanga* where Buganda's fallen Kings were buried, Mary and Margaret kept vigil. The hut was built using local materials and its interior was lined entirely with bark cloth. The two women envisioned their environment as depicting the magnificence of Kiganda culture as upheld by their ancestors.

Margaret: The glory that...came from bark cloth... Eeee we could see the glory that they experienced because they were amidst bark cloth as clothing and that was their glory. So we did not abandon the bark cloth completely There are times when we all dress up in bark cloth (reminisces happily) in our bark cloth...having fun!

Mary: This is how our cloth is known, it is our dressing, our curtains, we used bark cloth for everything. There are times when we are told to go dressed up prestigiously in bark cloth to the King but not well dressed in other clothes (*gomesi)* and be seen, no. Even if one puts on the other clothes (*gomesi*) we still need to wrap bark cloth over it. That is how important it is to us, it is our kingdom's status.

Having bark cloth adorn that stately space was a way of expressing the regal epitome of Buganda. With its great Kings buried there and people flocking from all over the world to experience one of UNESCO's recognized World Heritage sites, using bark cloth extensively in its architecture gives emphasis to the cultural significance of bark cloth. For Mary and Margaret living in a space where their heritage was fully expressed in the form of bark cloth, connected them to their ancestry. It also strengthened their sense of

cultural responsibility and, for Margaret, who feared to sleep in bark cloth beddings, demystified bark cloth for her to a certain extent. As such she was able to adorn herself with bark cloth when going into the King's presence.

5.4.2b Body as place

Aside from the physical space, as in Mary and Margaret's case, the body became a space through which, when wearing bark cloth, the body was transformed into a symbol of cultural and identity expression. This became even more apparent with the places a person chose to be while wearing it. For instance, Irene, a seller of bark cloth, owned a skirt and blouse, dress and *gomesi* (female traditional Kiganda dress) made from bark cloth. She recalled and told a story of one incident among others when she wore the *gomesi*.

> There was a time we hosted *Mulwanyammuli* (the Prime Minister of Buganda) and I wore it. He was very happy and impressed because I was serving on the high table where they were seated. I had on my bark cloth outfit! (Proudly) ...I chose that occasion because when *Mulwanyammuli* came to visit us he had earlier said on the day he was elected that his first visit would be at a cultural heritage site. This place being known as *ewa Musigula*, it is known as a cultural heritage site because it is known as a place where bark cloth is sold. So when I realized that the Prime Minister chose to begin his tour here before visiting the rest of Buganda, I had to wear it...and indeed he was very happy with me.

Like Mary and Margaret who adorned their bodies with bark cloth when going into the King's presence, wearing a bark cloth outfit on such an occasion was, for Irene, a tangible expression of her identity. It was also her way of showing her loyalty to Buganda Kingdom using bark cloth as a sign. As Dittmar (1992) states, people use material property to articulate their personal and social distinctiveness, and sense of belonging (pp. 10-11). For these women, wearing bark cloth was a way of identifying

themselves as Baganda, in addition to being appropriate in their role as custodians of Buganda culture.

However, for material objects to be understood by others they must be socially recognized as symbols of identity expression (Dittmar, 1992, p. 11). Because when Irene wore her contemporary styled bark cloth dress on another occasion the reaction was different.

> ...since I had it tailored, I have used it about three times and I went to the village in it. But the people I passed on the street and in the market were very surprised to see me dressed in it and some would even come and touch it to confirm that it was bark cloth. They saw it as different and were very pleased about it. In fact they thought I came from the King's palace. *(laughs)*

Although wearing bark cloth outfits for Irene were tangible signs of her identity and commitment to her culture, the local people saw her as a symbol of royalty. The people's reaction shows how much the modern textiles had eroded their understanding of bark cloth as a cultural textile. For them bark cloth was no longer an everyday cloth, as Irene had chosen to demonstrate. Although it was these same people who made bark cloth, they saw it as a cultural cloth that had to be worn for a cultural reason. Irene on the other hand demonstrated that bark cloth was not limited to the cultural but extended to more intangible interactions of the social and daily life, like it was in the past, (Dittmar, 1992, pp. 12-13). She had chosen her body as the space on which to display bark cloth as a symbol of who she was.

Whether it is a real physical space or a metaphorical space that bark cloth occupies, its significance in that space cannot be ignored. Without the bark cloth, that space may communicate a different message but with bark cloth there, it transforms the space into a place laden with intangible information that calls for interpretation. In

summary, aside from the space occupied by bark cloth and the time over which bark cloth was experienced, as we will see in the next section, the relationships with various people that the participants experienced bark cloth with, also revealed the intensity of the tangible-intangible relationship of bark cloth.

5.4.3 Personal/Social

Dobres (1999) underscores the importance of interpersonal social relationships in making sense of the material world. Material objects facilitate the constant creation and recreation of social cultural boundaries and structure (Stark, 1999, p.24). Human interactional experiences with each other and with their material world facilitate the understanding of intangible sociomaterial dynamics. For most of the participants, awareness of bark cloth (aside from the superficial awareness they had), was prompted by other individuals from within their local communities and abroad. They were able to consider the social and cultural implications of interacting with bark cloth. However, different people from different cultural contexts have unique, culturally-shaped personae, but the concept of globalization has influenced the intersection and subsequent reshaping of cultures (or cultural selves) across various nations (Mathews, 2000). Encountering the "cultural supermarket" has enabled people to become aware of who they are by choosing whether to revert to their original traditional culture or to conform to the global social culture (Mathews, 2000, p. 17). For many of the participants, interactions with people from within and outside Buganda enabled them to attend more to their material culture. These interactions influenced the participants' perceptions of bark cloth, which led to constant shifts in how they perceived bark cloth, and subsequently, their involvement

with it. Thus the participants became more aware of the intangible aspects of bark cloth during their relationships with those other people.

5.4.3a Foreign interactions

In Raymond's case, for instance, working as a conservator at one of the World's heritage sites declared by UNESCO where bark cloth was largely used as an architectural material, did not necessarily mean that he made sense of the bark cloth beyond its physical presence. It was not until researchers and tourists from outside Uganda drew his attention to it that he became aware of its cultural importance.

> I worked at Kasubi for a long time but most importantly what sparked off my interest and increased my knowledge about bark cloth were the numerous people who came from outside Uganda in search for knowledge regarding various aspects of our culture here in Uganda. They asked me various questions regarding many topics including bark cloth. That inspired me to start researching on bark cloth.

Raymond's interaction with these foreigners enabled him to attend more to bark cloth and see beyond its physicality. The fact that these people had developed an interest in it, informed him that there was more to it than what he saw. He therefore sought more information about bark cloth so that he had answers for other people who wanted to know more about it, but at the same time he was able to find out more information regarding Buganda culture and its objects. His increased knowledge interested many, especially foreign researchers who took him on as a research assistant. During that time, he was exposed to more aspects of bark cloth than he was previously aware of. For instance, he recalled accompanying a foreign female researcher to Buganda's official bark cloth maker whom he was previously not informed about. Raymond was astounded that he

was unaware that such a person existed and yet the woman even knew where the bark cloth maker lived!

Another research incident that stood out for him was the visit to a traditional medicine man in the company of a foreign researcher, which has been referred to in the previous section on place/spatial contexts. Recalling that encounter, he realized that the foreign researchers played a big role in encouraging him to develop an interest in bark cloth.

> ...I got encouragement from these whites...I went with a white person... he trains doctors in Mulago (Hospital). He is a doctor but he told me that he is also an anthropologist. I asked him why he wanted to visit a medicine man and he replied that he trains doctors, 'Qualified doctors are preferred but I want to see how these medicine men treat their patients, then I go back and see how I will polish my students'. We went to one of the medicine men and he demonstrated how he treats his patients. A chicken was cut and placed on bark cloth...everything was real, nothing was staged. I noticed that that is how he treats his patients, I saw him lay bark cloth on the floor, they sat on it, cut the chicken and bled it and so on. We took pictures. He gave the patient medicine and the patient gave him money, in fact it is on this bark cloth that the medicine man pours the traditional money (cowry shells). He pours them "whaaarrr!" so he can call upon the spirits to come and start treating his patient.

For Raymond, it was not so much seeing the medicine man with the bark cloth but, it was the interest that the white man had shown in the ritual involving bark cloth that compelled Raymond to look beyond the bark cloth for what it stood for. He summed up his interpretation of the use of bark cloth in the ritual as follows.

> ...the traditional medicine men, they use bark cloth as a sign that they are conserving their culture... I swear I do not think there is a medicine man that performs their functions without bark cloth. If there is any who does so without bark cloth, whoever seeks their assistance may in most cases...doubt their authenticity...they may not be convinced... we believe that when one is dressed or covered in bark cloth, the ancestors being called upon...because when they are performing the rituals of calling upon the spirits or the ancestors, the hosts are usually covered with bark cloth. This is what we call something intangible because it cannot be touched or seen but because our ancestors used to put on bark cloth, it is believed that these spirits have the memory of that cloth – bark cloth.

Raymond was able to conclude that the use of bark cloth in that ceremony was used physically to convey a deeper message. It was being used as a medium between the seen and unseen, the tangible and the intangible. This story brings out clearly the interrelationship between the bark cloth and what it stands for at that particular time. For the ritual to be complete the bark cloth had to be present, and its presence in the ritual was also necessary if its significance was to be realized.

In addition to his personal experience with foreigners in Uganda, Raymond also travelled outside Uganda to receive training in traditional conservation. During that time, he interacted with people from around the world and as they described their own experiences with their material culture, Raymond was compelled to look back at his own material culture, particularly at bark cloth and attend more to all aspects of it.

> ...I interacted with colleagues in similar programs...in their respective countries. We were able to share our experiences, some of them were highly qualified, were graduates but you could tell that they had a high interest in their cultures, they were proud for taking this for our children to come...I saw the importance of the role we are playing in this world to see that we try to preserve these things... There I learnt so many things and aspects..I was able to see what South Africa calls "our things" (*ebyaffe*), our culture. Here it appears that we stress Kingdom issues as our culture but those people want to have their traditions back, to be able to perform their cultural traditions like traditional worship and so on... They really like their cultural traditions, they like the things they used to do.

As Roth (2001) explains, experiencing a foreign environment makes one very aware of the material environment that they may take for granted. The foreigner tries to interpret the new environment and eventually will experience changes in emotions, (p. 6). Initially one may feel excited in the new environment, then they may develop feelings of frustration and alienation because of the unfamiliar environment and eventually, they develop nostalgia and start

surrounding themselves with material objects that they are familiar with. Likewise Raymond's international experience enabled him to attend more to his own material culture and realize that conserving material objects was a way of preserving one's culture so that the subsequent generations and other cultures could access that information. Mathews (2000) explains that with the wide range of cultures available in the cultural supermarket, it is imperative that one chooses those cultural ideas that best represent their social world.

5.4.3b Local interactions

For Irene, the bark cloth seller, involvement in selling bark cloth was a choice that her father made for her as a way of reconnecting with her roots. Like Raymond, she also had researchers who came to her with questions about bark cloth. From their questions, Irene realized that she had really not paid much attention to bark cloth beyond its physicality and was remotely aware of its cultural importance in Buganda. She realized the need to find out more about bark cloth because her customers asked her about how bark cloth was made, what it represented, the different uses and more. Irene then made an effort to find out more about bark cloth so that she could respond to her clients' needs and answer their questions, but in the process, she informed herself too.

> I know a lot because I have been in this business for a long time. I visit the places where bark cloth is made and I learn a lot from those visits...in the village (where she obtained the bark cloth for sale) I am able to see the entire process of how the cloth is obtained, as they strip, steam then start beating the cloth... I want to learn. For instance you have come and asked me several questions on bark cloth...I should be in position to answer my customers' questions. Sometimes tourists come and ask about the process, we explain it to them and we take them to the village to show them how it is made. It is just like when you take a child to school, they learn so many things. This being the business I am involved in I need to keep learning more about it. I find it amazing that the bark of a tree is

> stripped and the final result is this beautiful cloth, and thus I am able to widen my knowledge about bark cloth.

As Irene sought out the information about bark cloth, she gained intangible knowledge which she was able to pass on to those who needed it and became more confident in what she was doing. She thus became a custodian of cultural knowledge, an intangible attribute which without the bark cloth would not be of any importance. She also became a go-between connecting the bark cloth makers (although she did not possess the physical skill of bark cloth making), who were also custodians of cultural information related to bark cloth, and the consumers who bought the bark cloth from her and chose to use bark cloth for several purposes depending on the information she gave them. Being associated with bark cloth, she became an embodiment of the intangible attributes of bark cloth.

To Sarah, who was involved in selling bark-cloth crafts for several years, bark cloth was just one of the materials used to make the crafts she sold mainly to tourists. But seeing bark cloth in another context, made her reconsider her own perception of it.

> I was in Nairobi last week and I was surprised that many people were drawing or printing very beautiful pictures on bark cloth. I said to myself, this is our bark cloth now these people are using it as media for art.

Her story reveals that material culture can cross boundaries or can coexist in different cultures and the meanings of the same form of material culture are recreated according to the contexts in which the bark cloth is found. The notion of the "cultural supermarket" is also concretized in Sarah's story. Various cultural identities can exist side by side in another culture or country and people will choose those identities depending on "artistic expression", "religious belief", and "cultural identity" (Mathews, 2000, pp. 20-21). For Sarah, bark cloth was an identity symbol, whereas for the Kenyans, it was a medium of art expression. Through the cultural supermarket, social and cultural relationships are

created and people are able to make more sense of who they are through those relationships. Although Sarah recognized the cultural importance of bark cloth, she was also encouraging women groups that made bark cloth artifacts in her community to explore more contemporary and exotic ways of presenting their bark cloth work with the aim of attracting a wider market…

> we are trying to make them transform that skill into making articles which are needed in the household things like table mats... pencil holders...handbags, decoration for the wall, book markers, you know things that people can use everyday and can buy more and more. And we are targeting both the home market and tourist industry.

From Sarah's efforts, changing the traditional ways in which bark cloth was presented meant changing the meanings to which the bark cloth could be attributed, with the hope that the seemingly estranged bark cloth could be more acceptable to the Baganda. Sarah's story also shows a different dimension to which bark cloth can be attributed as an embodiment of intangible heritage. It also shows the shifts that may happen in how bark cloth is perceived. From her story, bark cloth both breaks cultural boundaries and acts as a cultural link that brings together people from different cultures. Thus when bark cloth is encountered in a tourist market, it communicates with people from various places and thus its intangible-tangible attributes become fluid.

Change, however, was not easily acceptable to Charles when he encountered processed bark cloth. He retold his experience.

> I have seen one artist...who...about two years ago had an exposure at the Uganda Museum and he brought in some of his products. But when you look at what he developed...it's like a hide. I told him it is good when he develops...but when it loses its natural character what's the meaning? Instead of killing this why don't you get a hide or some artificial material other than...keep this the way it is...since we can't have any chemical that can preserve it without killing it's natural feeling, let us use other material..., it's experience you get when you see the bark in its natural form. ..It's different from when you look at these leather things...after treating it, it's no longer bark cloth.

Charles' experience reveals that bark cloth has unique characteristics which, if tampered with, destroy the bark cloth. This means that different people interpret material culture differently and because a lot of times it has cultural implications, changing it may mean that that the cultural symbolism that the object possesses may be lost. Once people cannot relate to something culturally, then they lose interest in it and it slowly recedes from the cultural scene.

5.4.4 Tying the threads together

Drawing from the concepts of time, place andpersonal- social relations to inform my analysis of my participants' stories of experience, I have been able to demonstrate that social and cultural contexts were key elements in enabling my participants to negotiate their relationship with bark cloth. As they encountered bark cloth at different times and places and with different people in their lives, they were able connect these experiences to the information obtained about bark cloth. As they recollected and told these stories, they revealed clearly that bark cloth was laden with intangible information that changed depending on the time and place of interaction and with whom the participants interacted. Thus the tangible aspects of bark cloth were directly linked to its intangible elements. Although UNESCO advocates for the need to integrate the approaches for safe guarding tangible and intangible heritage, it defines the two forms of heritage separately. Using bark cloth as an example of material cultural heritage (Moreno et al., 2005), I have demonstrated that classifying it under either tangible or intangible heritage is actually robbing it of one or the other perspective. Through my participants' stories of experience with bark cloth, I illustrate that bark cloth embodies both tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage and the two have to be considered

interrelatedly when inquiring into material culture studies. In the next chapter, I present my conclusions of this inquiry. I also make recommendations for possible policy implications that need to be considered especially during the transmission, preservation and safeguarding of material cultural heritage. Additionally, I present some possible future threads that could be followed in subsequent studies.

Chapter six : Conclusions, Policy implications and Recommendations for future research

6.1 Conclusions

Drawing from a broad range of literature in the fields of human ecology, material culture and narrative inquiry, my narrative analysis of Buganda people's experiences with bark cloth, a key element of their material culture, reveals that material cultural heritage is a hub for both tangible and intangible cultural elements. This study provides useful information for approaching broader aspects of material cultural studies, particularly regarding the transmission, preservation and protection of material cultural heritage. Specifically, this thesis advocates for the need to address the interrelationship between tangible and intangible elements of bark cloth in Buganda-Central Uganda. This is partly in response to UNESCO's call for safeguarding oral and intangible heritage and cultural and natural heritage (http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev), and its recognition "that the elements of the tangible and intangible heritage of communities and groups are often interdependent", and that "wherever possible, integrated approaches be elaborated to the effect that the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible heritage of communities and groups is consistent and mutually beneficial and reinforcing" (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001376/137634e.pdf). This thesis is also an attempt to prove that bark cloth, as an example of material culture, should not be classified and defined by UNESCO under the tangible heritage and the craft under intangible heritage. The two are interrelated and this should be emphasized because there is so much intangible information around bark cloth

My field inquiry took place in Buganda, Central Uganda where bark cloth is a key element of the diverse material culture. Buganda is the largest ethnic region in Uganda and in the past, bark cloth characterized their daily and spiritual lives. Today, bark cloth is still being used in some traditional rituals although its uses are now expanding to include art and crafts, especially to attract a foreign market. In 2005, the craft of bark cloth making in Uganda was placed on the UNESCO world list for intangible heritage. Although most of the focus was on Buganda, this created a boost for the people of Uganda to produce more bark cloth and bark cloth products and these have continued to target the international market. The cultural aspects of bark cloth seem to be gradually discarded for the economic aspects which seem to be more lucrative and this was partly what prompted me to get into this study. I felt that if people focused on the economic, the cultural aspects would be ignored and so what was being transmitted about bark cloth may not include the cultural element. I, therefore, wanted to make explicit that it is imperative that the interrelationship between the intangible and tangible aspects of culture be emphasized during their transmission.

In this study, I employed narrative inquiry which focuses on narrative understanding of experiences as the phenomena of inquiry and the methodology of studying the phenomena (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). I inquired into eleven people's stories of their lived experiences with bark cloth, with the aim of demonstrating that the tangible elements of bark cloth could not be separated from the intangible. If one was to get involved in bark cloth activities, they needed to recognize that bark cloth embodied intangible information and, as one considered the tangible, the intangible also came into play. I talked to a bark cloth maker, a bark cloth seller, a maker of bark cloth artifacts, a

seller of bark cloth artifacts, an artist who painted on bark cloth, a fashion designer who designed bark cloth outfits, two custodians of a cultural site, a conservator, Buganda's cultural minister and a cultural officer from the central government. I heard their stories of experience through conversations with them and I used these stories to illustrate how people embody objects with intangible information through story.

While my participants shared their stories, I was aware of the three-dimensional narrative space within which narrative inquiry takes place (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Working within this three-dimensional narrative space means being aware of the time that the inquiry takes place, and the back and forth movement that an individual experiences as they travel back across time to earlier experiences and make these part of their present, as they tell their stories. Place is another dimension of the three-dimensional narrative space, which also includes the physical space in which storied experiences take place, and the mental places that people travel to as they recollect and tell their stories of experience. The personal and social interaction is the third dimension of the three-dimensional narrative space and this includes the other people that one interacts with and the mental negotiations one makes with the self as they experience phenomena. For my participants, as they recalled their interaction with bark cloth, they travelled back in time and recalled the places and with whom they shared those experiences. I recorded our conversations and, as my participants shared their stories, I asked them for clarification in some cases and after the conversations, I observed some of their activities and wrote down my observations in a journal.

I proceeded to transcribe and translate the field texts and composed narrative accounts from these. As I composed the accounts, I analyzed some of what my

participants said. I then used the components of the three-dimensional narrative space to link the threads in my participants' stories. I used my participants' stories of time to show how their perceptions of bark cloth kept shifting, as they interacted with bark cloth over the years. The dimension of place enabled me to demonstrate that the places where bark cloth was used helped to assign intangible meaning to these and these meanings therefore varied with where and when bark cloth was used. The people my participants interacted with during their own involvement with bark cloth also influenced the way my participants attended to bark cloth. These interactions also caused my participants to reconsider their own thoughts about bark cloth and to change the way they interacted with it.

From this inquiry into people's stories of experience with bark cloth in Buganda, central Uganda, I have been able to demonstrate that separating tangible and intangible heritage is actually endangering both forms of heritage. This is because intangible heritage always has something to do with something tangible either in the form of an object or a person. By promoting intangible heritage only, the associated tangible heritage is endangered and vice versa. I also find it impossible to promote each form of heritage individually because the tangible is not easily separated from the intangible. The craft of bark cloth making cannot be separated from the trees, the tools and the people involved in the craft. So as we seek to classify different forms of material cultural heritage, we need to be aware of the interrelationship between the tangible and intangible aspects. One cannot be discussed without the other.

This study has also revealed that as people tell their stories of experience with material objects, they embody the objects with intangible information which otherwise

would be missing if one encountered the object without an accompanying story or information. Although oral heritage has been placed by UNESCO under intangible heritage, the people in whose mind and body where this heritage is said to be embodied, are physical. They are, therefore, tangible manifestations of the intangible.

Through this study, I have also demonstrated that narrative inquiry can be used effectively in material culture analyses. Material culture involves the creation and use of objects by people. Narrative inquiry focuses on people's stories of experience as its source of data. As people interact with objects, they are creating stories for themselves and for their future. In narrative inquiries that focus on material objects, it is inevitable that people's experiences with those objects will be sought through story. As people tell their stories, there are providing narratives for the inquirer to use in the analysis of the study. Thus narrative inquiry is appropriate in material cultural analyses.

6.2 Implications for policy makers

I found the defining of tangible and intangible heritage by UNESCO inconsistent with how I viewed material culture, and its classification under tangible heritage only was problematic. There is need to revisit the definitions of intangible and tangible heritage and to make explicit the interrelationship between the two. This would help member states that are focusing on safeguarding their heritage to know that they need to integrate all aspects around their heritage. For example, if bark cloth making in Uganda is to be safeguarded, there is also need to recognize that, there are differences in the way bark cloth is made across the country. In the case of Buganda, there is also need to recognize that, as one of my participants stated: even the makers of the mallets are dying off and

there is need for that craft to be passed on. There is also a need to recognize the people involved in bark cloth art and crafts making and users of bark cloth generally and promote the development of those crafts.

The central government of Uganda needs to recognize that bark cloth in Uganda is now internationally recognized so, there is also need to introduce some of the indigenous crafts into the formal education curriculum to ensure that all children have access to learning the craft and not have to go the villages to learn it. This will also ensure that both the theoretical and practical elements of the craft are passed on to the younger generations, hence demonstrating that the intangible and tangible elements are interrelated.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

This study could be expanded to include comparative studies of bark cloth activities amongst other ethnic groups in Uganda, or between Buganda and another community that also has bark cloth as a key element of their material culture. The study could also be expanded to include other forms of material culture in Buganda, and Uganda.

Conclusion

Through this study I gained a clearer understanding of how narrative inquiry can be used in material culture studies, and particularly how people's use of story embodied bark cloth with intangible information. I originate from Buganda - central Uganda but it was important for me to conduct this study otherwise I would never have been able to comprehend how people's stories can help me understand the relationship between the

tangible and intangible elements of bark cloth. I was also able to learn that it is not easy to be drawn to a traditional object if one lacks cultural information about it, even when it originates from their culture.

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Appendix I
Information sheet

Title of project Potentiality of bark cloth as a cultural resource for Buganda

Purpose

This research project hopes to explore how Buganda's culture can be recaptured, protected and preserved using bark cloth as a resource.

Methods

If you are interested in taking part in this study you will be asked to share your cultural or other experiences, reflections and/or memories with bark cloth either physically or through any decision making process and what you think or feel about the place of bark cloth in Buganda's culture. You will be asked questions by the researcher which you can answer in your own words or feel free to demonstrate any activity. There is no right or wrong answer. This interview will be scheduled at your convenience and will last between thirty minutes and two hours however, you may be requested to talk to the researcher again. The reason for this is for you to clarify on one or two points from our first discussion and the researcher may also want to ask some questions which they thought of after the first interview. This second interview should take about thirty minutes to one hour. Information shared or written down or any photographs taken will be shared with you so you can decide what to include or exclude from the study. It will also be an opportunity for me to clarify themes or insights I develop in my analysis of the interview.

Confidentiality

A tape recorder will be used to record our interview(s) and the researcher will translate and/or transcribe the tapes. The name of the person will not be recorded on the tape or the paper instead a number will be given to that interview. A fake name will be used on anything that gets written about the interview and only the researcher and the participant will know the name of the person on the tape. Photographs of bark cloth and related artifacts and activities will be taken however, permission will be obtained from those persons who may appear in the photographs before they are taken. All of the information that has the person's name and /or visual representation will be stored on computer devices like compact discs (CDs), floppy discs and/or DVDs which will be locked up securely in a cabinet in the researcher's custody. They will be kept for three years after which they will be destroyed. Interviews will be done preferably at the site of the interviewee's activity or in a place preferred by the interviewee. It is possible that the people at the activity site will know that you took part in the research but they will not know what you said.

Benefits

This study may be a chance for you to share your direct or indirect contribution to the preservation of Buganda's culture using bark cloth as a resource and/or may not have direct benefits for you. It will also be a chance to document the extent of bark cloth use in Buganda over the years and will provide an opportunity to revitalize the use of bark cloth in order to improve the socio-economic and cultural status of Buganda.

Risks

I do not anticipate any risks on your part in this study as your identity will be protected. Any negative feelings could be discussed with the researcher who will help you find any help you need.

Withdrawal from the study

Participation in the study is voluntary so if even after you have agreed to do the interview you can withdraw from the study before or during the interview. If you are asked to do a second interview you can decide that you do not want to. However you can only withdraw from the study not later than a month after the first interview.

Use of your information

The researcher is a student at the University and is doing this study as part of a Master's thesis (Textiles and Clothing) and is not being paid for by the central government or Buganda government. What you say in your interview will not cause you to lose any of your benefits. The researcher will use what you say to understand how bark cloth can be used as a resource to help recapture, preserve and protect Buganda culture. The researcher will also ask other people who have been directly or indirectly involved with bark cloth either physically or otherwise about their experiences with bark cloth. The information obtained will be used to make recommendations on the potentiality of bark cloth as a resource for Buganda's socio-economic and cultural development. A report will be made from the information obtained and if you want, a short version of this report will be availed to you.

None of the reports that get made will have your name on it, however in case of any concerns, complaints or consequences please contact Georgie Jarvis Administrative Support to the AFHE Research Ethics Board, 2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton AB T6G 2P5, Tel (780) 492-4931, Fax (780) 492-0097.

Yours sincerely
Miriam Nassozi Sekandi
Graduate Student
Department of Human Ecology
University of Alberta
Tel (256) 41 273582 (contact in Uganda)

Appendix B
Informed Consent form

Title of project Potentiality of bark cloth as a cultural resource for Buganda

Investigator Miriam Nassozi Sekandi
M.A (Thes) Human Ecology
Department of Human Ecology
University of Alberta
Tel (256) 41 273582 (Uganda contact)

Consent Please circle your answers

Do you consent to being audio-taped?	YES	NO
Do you consent to being photographed?	YES	NO
Do you consent to having your activities or artifacts photographed?	YES	NO
Have you read and received a copy of the information sheet?	YES	NO
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	YES	NO
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	YES	NO
Do you understand that you can quit taking part in this study at any time but not later than a month after the first interview?	YES	NO
Has confidentiality been explained to you?	YES	NO
Do you understand who will be able to see or hear what you said?	YES	NO
Do you know what the information you say will be used for?	YES	NO
Do you give permission to use the data for the purposes specified?	YES	NO

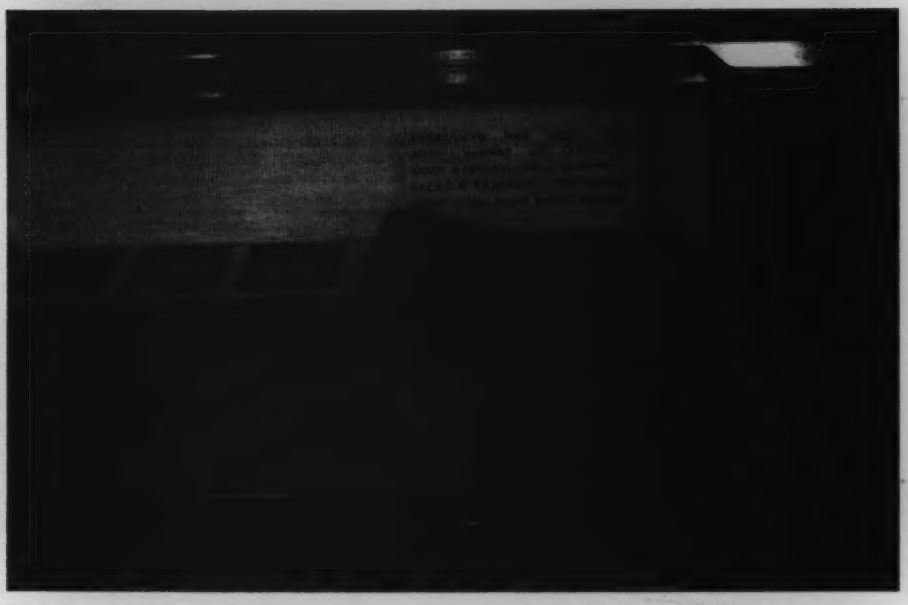
Name of participant (Please print) _____

Signature of participant _____

Signature of researcher _____

Date _____

Appendix III



Display cases found in the Uganda Museum documenting bark cloth activity in Uganda.
© Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix III (cont'd)

Another display case found in the Uganda Museum containing pieces of bark cloth from various tree species and different types of mallets. © Miriam N. Sekandi.

Another display case in the Uganda museum showcasing contemporary methods of decorating large pieces of bark cloth by printing and patchwork. © Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix IV

The interior of the main hut *(Muzibu Azaala Mpanga)*. The walls and poles supporting the roof are covered completely with bark cloth. In the bottom picture, the pseudo graves behind the spears are also draped with bark cloth.
© Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix V

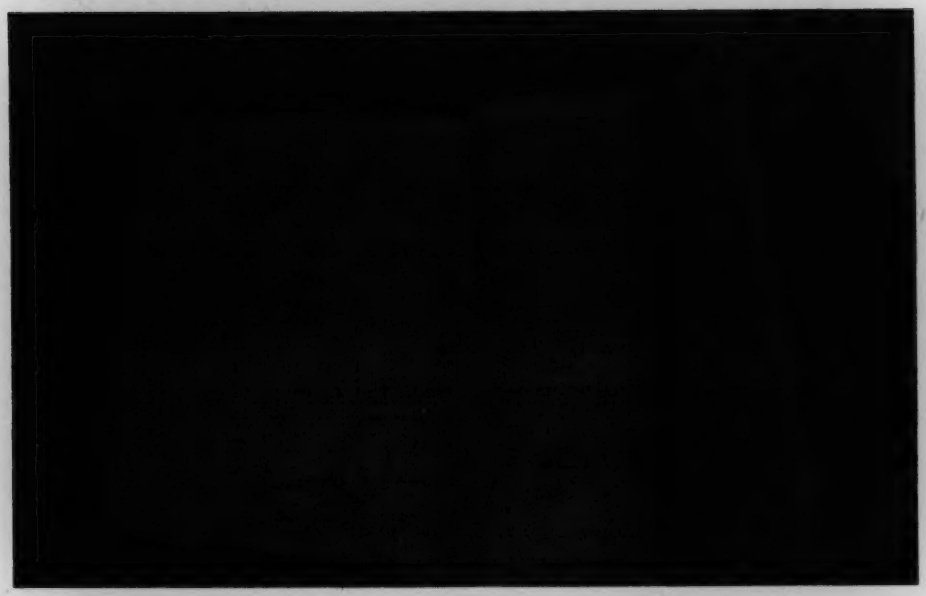
Andrew's royal mallets. Top: This mallet has larger grooves and is used initially on the fresh bark. Bottom: This mallet is used on the softer bark . It has smaller groves which help to keep the bark soft and smooth without damaging it. © Miriam N. Sekandi.

Appendix V (cont'd)

The *omukomago* where Andrew performs his royal duties. © Miriam N. Sekandi

Demonstrating how the banana leaves are wrapped around a stripped tree trunk.
© Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix VI



Kitentegere which is the piece of bark cloth made from the bark of a tree stripped for the first time. © Miriam N. Sekandi

Kimote, the better quality bark cloth obtained from subsequent strippings.
© Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix VI (cont'd)

Ddundu, the lighter or white bark cloth from *Kirundu* tree. © Miriam N. Sekandi

Two-tone bark cloth sometimes also referred to as *Kirundu.* © Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix VII

A collection of some of Charles' paintings done on bark cloth bark ground
© Miriam N. Sekandi

Appendix VIII

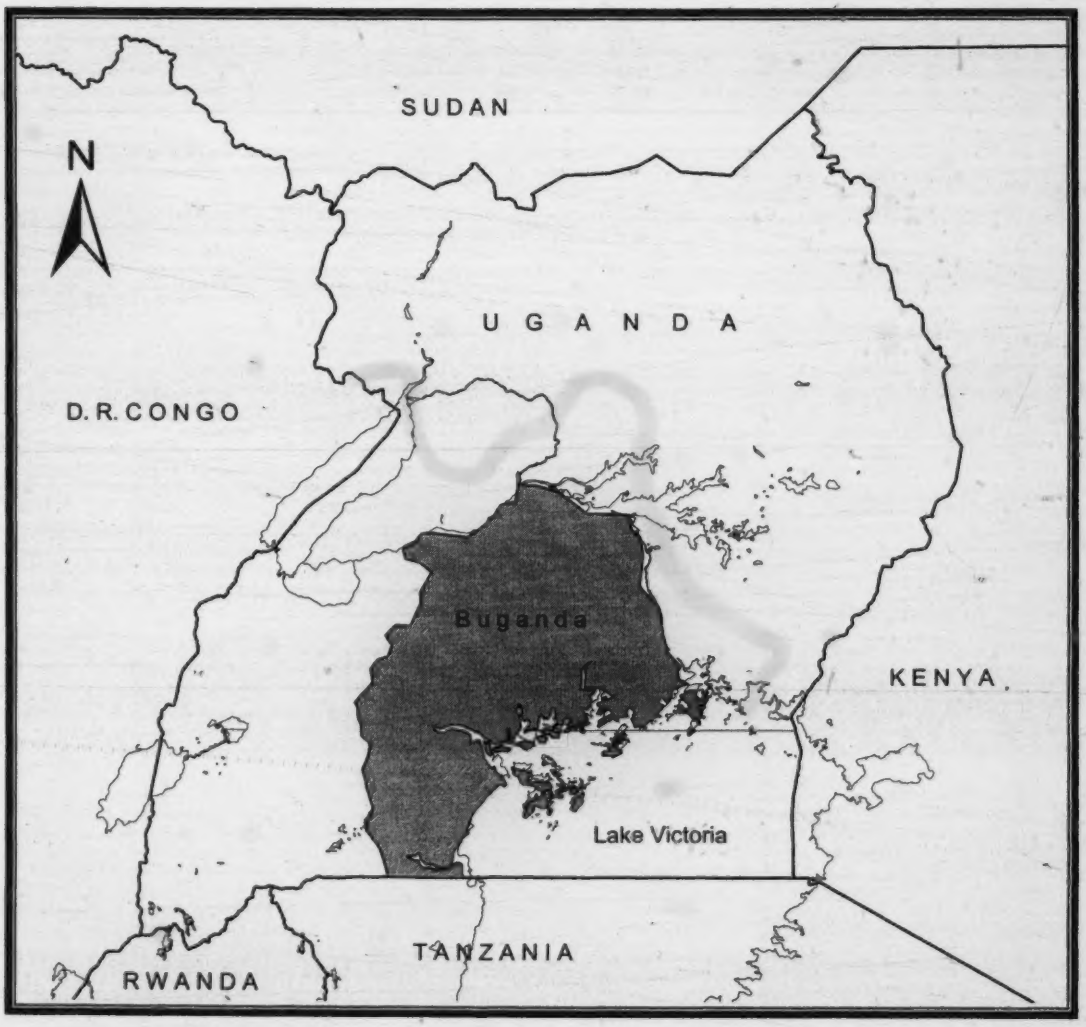
Some of the artefacts displayed in Sarah's shop. © Miriam N. Sekandi.

Cushion covers (top) and Bag (bottom) made from bark cloth. These were also found in Sarah's shop. © Miriam N.Sekandi

Appendix IX

Penny displaying a fish-shaped cushion made from bark cloth. © Miriam N. Sekandi.

Appendix X



Map of Uganda showing the geographical location of Buganda